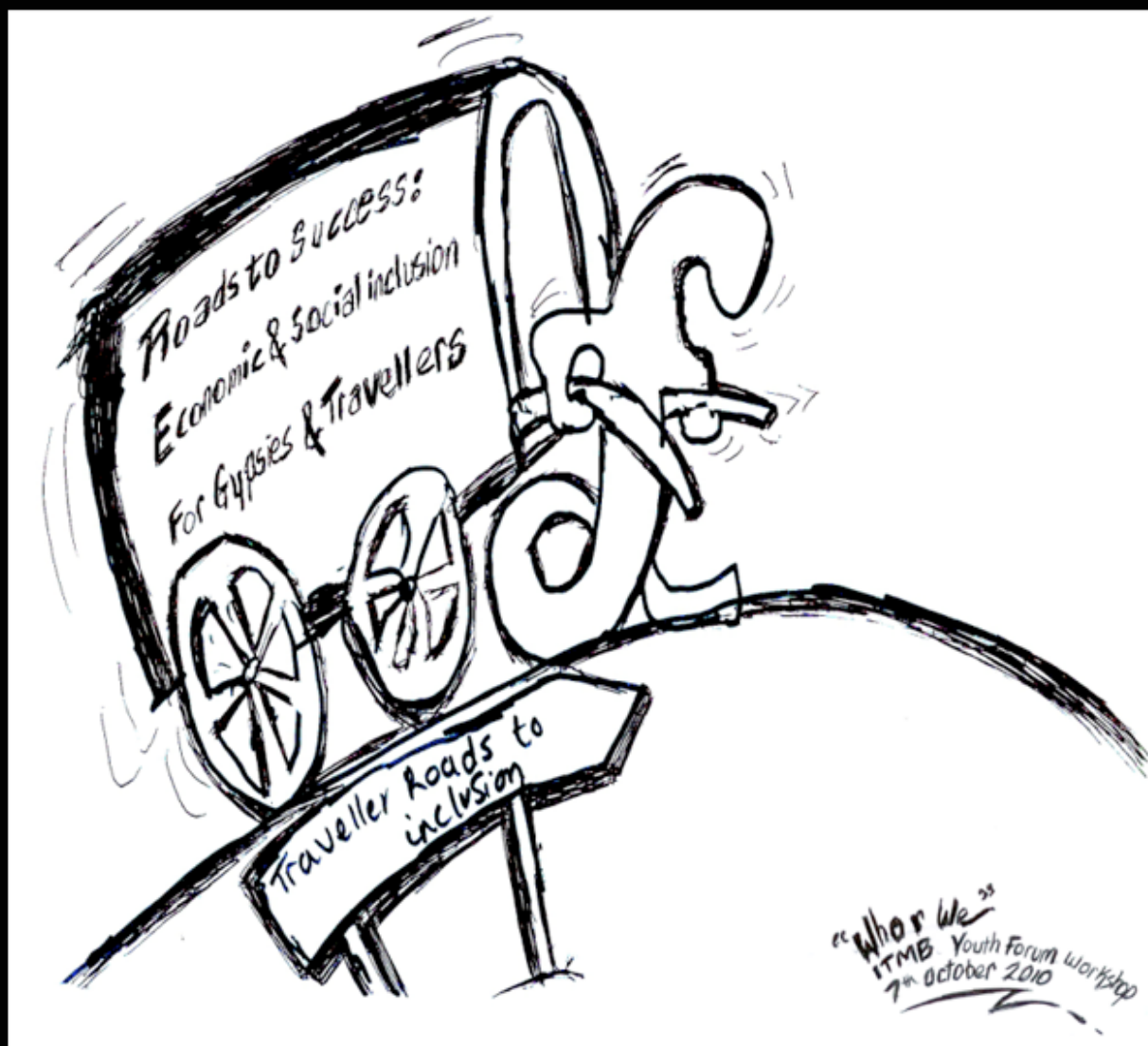


An Irish Traveller Movement in Britain Report

# ROADS TO SUCCESS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS



Principal Authors: Andrew Ryder & Margaret Greenfields



**LOTTERY FUNDED**



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This report was made possible by the generous financial support of the Big Lottery Fund

Principal Authors: Andrew Ryder & Margaret Greenfields

## Forward

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As a community development, policy and voice charity, one of our core objectives is to relieve the poverty and promote the welfare and inclusion of the Traveller communities. We do this by acting as a bridge builder bringing the Traveller communities, service providers and policy makers together, thereby stimulating debate and promoting forward-looking strategies to promote increased race equality, civic engagement, inclusion, service provision and community cohesion.

The increasingly documented marginalisation and chronic exclusion experienced by the Gypsy and Traveller communities of Britain continues to be of grave concern to all involved with Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (ITMB). In our day to day work we increasingly witness, but also hear about from our colleagues on the front line, the poor health, evictions, homelessness, isolation, unemployment, and lack of access to service provision with no real and sustainable signs of improvement.

We are delighted to be able to bring you this very timely report ITMB's "Roads to Success" "Routes to Economic and Social Inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers. The report is extremely timely in light of the many sweeping policy changes being implemented by the new coalition Government which are having an adverse impact on the Gypsy and Traveller communities. Gypsy and Travellers living in Britain today face an uncertain future. Considering that the Traveller communities have some of the poorest social outcomes of any group in Britain, it follows that the impending cuts to public services will have a disproportionate effect on the community, and the voluntary and community sector that work with them. To be inclusive and improve Gypsy and Travellers poor social outcomes such as low educational attainment, poor up take of apprenticeships and high levels of unemployment it is essential that there is real commitment from the Government, and public bodies in supporting and addressing the situation.

The report has explored and highlighted the difficulties and barriers experienced by the communities to achieving economic inclusion, however it also shares and highlights the success factors and values identified by the communities in attaining economic inclusion. Some of ITMB's work portfolios are already aligned with many of the recommendations of the report. However we will certainly

be adjusting other areas to ensure we are delivering specifically targeted support. Through this report ITMB along with the communities have been able to highlight some very important issues. As we develop, refine and implement our strategic plans we hope that central and local government, public and statutory sector bodies will take this report on board and work in partnership with the Traveller and Gypsy communities of Britain to ensure a road to success for all.

Finally I would like to express an enormous gratitude to all who have given so generously of their time in compiling this valuable report:

**Yvonne MacNamara, Director, Irish Traveller Movement in Britain**

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This report is dedicated to the memory of the following Gypsy and Traveller activists, community role models and civil rights champions who have passed away in recent years but who continue to inspire future generations of Gypsies and Travellers in their struggle for economic, social and political equality: Sylvie Dunn, Tommy Docherty, Patrick Delaney, Eli Frankham, Tommy Lee, John Mercer,

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

- Whilst there is much literature on the Gypsy and Traveller communities in relation to accommodation and wider ranging social exclusion issues, there is a significant dearth of knowledge on the socio-economic experiences and circumstances of these groups. This paucity of information has been highlighted in a recent review by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Cemlyn, et. al., 2009) which found evidence to suggest that Gypsies and Travellers face high levels of economic exclusion particularly in the areas of employment and access to financial services.
- The Roads to Success report, funded by Big Lottery Research sheds a clearer light on this one facet of inequality facing many Gypsy and Traveller families. This spotlight on employment and financial issues concentrates in part on exploring the links between access to work and other variables such as accommodation, education and engagement with the wider 'mainstream' community. The report highlights that while many Gypsies and Travellers face serious obstacles on the road to achieving social and economic inclusion, the communities also form an integral part of local economies and communities throughout Britain.
- The report which emerged from the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project (TEIP) has four distinct methodological features:
  - Based on a Participatory Action Research model involving Gypsy and Traveller community members in collecting, collating and analysing the data and findings.
  - Qualitative research approach (specifically semi-structured interviews) allowing TEIP to capture 'rich' detailed information which was then contextualised and analysed to look for patterns and core themes.
  - Purposive Sampling ensuring TEIP interviewees came from a cross section of ages (between 18 and 87), geographical location (9 English Regions) and genders.
  - Ethnic Sampling meant that out of a total of 95 interviews, TEIP focused primarily on English Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers (G/IT) (86 interviews) whilst separately looking at the experiences of a small sample of Roma and New Travellers (9 interviews).
- The Roads to Success report posits three main questions:
  - How have some Gypsies and Travellers achieved economic and social inclusion?
  - What are the definitions of success and economic and social inclusion amongst Gypsies and Travellers?
  - What have been the effects of local and national initiatives on economic inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers?

### The Traveller Economy

- In this report the 'Traveller Economy' refers to those Gypsies and Travellers who have earned a living in traditional Traveller work practices which are distinguished by some or all of the following characteristics: self-employment often within close family and kin networks, in-family training, non separation of work/home place, sharing of labour and tools, entrepreneurialism etc. Such work as trading at markets, landscape gardening, dealing in scrap metal and cultural trades/arts are all considered by TEIP as traditional Traveller economic practices.

- TEIP found that 40 per cent of the G/IT interviewees worked in the 'Traveller economy'. This compared to approximately 80 per cent of G/IT interviewees' parents who had worked or who were still working in the Traveller economy. This represents a dramatic 50 per cent decline in G/IT working in the Traveller Economy over just one generation. A similar trend over a succeeding generation would see the Traveller Economy almost extinct.
- Amongst G/IT interviewees engaged in the Traveller economy, one quarter received no or virtually no formal education whilst nearly two thirds had received some education (mainly at primary school level). The overwhelming majority of TEIP respondents had no formal qualifications despite frequently being highly skilled. Only six interviewees working within the Traveller Economy had gained any vocational qualifications (e.g. City and Guilds certificates in practical skills) and none had academic qualifications.
- TEIP found that G/IT women are far more likely than G/IT men to move away from the Traveller Economy into waged labour. Only a quarter of all female interviewees below the age of 30 were engaged in the Traveller Economy.
- A third of interviewees engaged in the Traveller Economy reported significant concerns about 'cold calling' restrictions and the impact on their livelihoods. Such restrictions were compounded by complex regulations and the low literacy levels of many community members working in the Traveller Economy.
- Only 10 per cent of the self-employed G/IT sample (the majority of whom worked in the Traveller Economy) had received business advice. This figure compares starkly with 50 per cent of ethnic minority business people and the majority of mainstream businesses who had accessed such information. The majority of G/IT interviewees engaged in the Traveller Economy were unaware of the business support to which they were entitled.
- Seventy six per cent of the G/IT interviewees working in the Traveller Economy lived on sites (the majority of which were privately owned family sites), 21 per cent lived in bricks and mortar accommodation and only one interviewee lived a predominantly nomadic lifestyle. These findings indicate that sites, with attached work areas linked to the home base and close kin networks facilitate the Traveller Economy.
- TEIP found that the severe shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites had a negative impact on the Traveller Economy. This finding is more pertinent considering the January 2010 caravan count revealed that approximately 20 percent of Britain's G/IT population living in caravans are officially categorised as homeless.
- The marital status of interviewees may have an impact on work patterns. Approximately 50 per cent of TEIP's overall G/IT female sample were unmarried/divorced. Single G/IT women were more likely to be employed outside the Traveller economy in waged (often low skilled) work.
- Thirty three per cent of TEIP interviewees working in the Traveller Economy had successfully adapted traditional models of the Traveller Economy and fused them with mainstream economic practices. TEIP identified an emerging trend amongst those interviewees who embraced such innovation of being keen to formally register their businesses and become certified practitioners (e.g. as tree surgeons).
- Gypsy and Traveller arts and culture represented a growth industry within the Traveller Economy. A small but important proportion of interviewees engaged in the Traveller Economy worked as self-employed artists drawing upon their heritage within their work.

### ***Waged Employment and Welfare***

- Approximately 60 per cent of the G/IT interviewees were in waged employment with two thirds of the waged sample being women.
- Nineteen per cent of G/IT interviewees were employed in professional roles with approximately 60 per cent of these professionals being female. This small but significant trend towards increasing professionalism is indicative of findings reported throughout TEIP which indicate that the children of interviewees (in all employment fields) were likely to have achieved higher educational qualifications or greater participation in formal education than their parents. The continuation of this trend will no doubt see an increasing trajectory of entry by G/IT's into professional occupations.
- Volunteering was found to be an important first step to employment for many Gypsies and Travellers. Approximately one third of the overall TEIP sample (mainly employed in the community sector) reported that they had found volunteering and activism invaluable preparation for their work.
- TEIP found there was a strong tradition of service in the armed forces by Gypsies and Travellers leading to new career opportunities and skills development. Eleven per cent of interviewees had personal experience of, or close family connections to, the armed forces.
- Approximately 13 per cent of the TEIP sample worked in low skilled and low waged occupations with G/IT women making up over 90 per cent of this group. Half of the interviewees in this category were socially housed and the other half were resident on sites which were predominantly owned by local authorities.
- TEIP found low levels of engagement with the informal economy with only a small minority of participants reporting that they had resorted to informal work when times were extremely difficult.
- TEIP found resistance to welfare benefit take-up amongst the G/IT sample. Of the two thirds of interviewees who responded to the question on take-up of unemployment benefits half indicated they had never claimed, just under a third said they had claimed for a short period (generally a few months and less than a year) and a fifth had accessed benefits for an unspecified period.

### ***Working for the Community***

- Despite an increase in recent years in the numbers of Gypsy and Traveller community organisations there are still very few when compared with other BME 'third sector' agencies.
- Over a quarter of the TEIP sample worked in community roles representing a growing trend towards this type of employment and a growing political awareness of Gypsy and Traveller issues amongst community members.
- Approximately three quarters of the Gypsy and Traveller employees interviewed in community posts were female, mirroring national trends which demonstrate that women are employed in community work in far greater numbers than men.
- Half of the waged community workers had returned to education after a gap in educational participation with the explicit intention of improving their literacy skills or gaining further qualifications. Interviewees were also motivated to work in the Third Sector through a desire to help and support their communities, and in many cases believed that being a community member was an asset when working with other Gypsies and Travellers.
- Many of the community workers interviewed by TEIP had been employed under 'positive action' principles where uncertified skills are taken into consideration and a good knowledge of the

community is defined as an essential factor within the short-listing and selection process.

### **Roma and New Travellers**

- Many Roma communities in the UK are officially restricted from working (namely A2 migrants) and/or find it hard to secure employment due to a lack of qualifications and low literacy skills. TEIP Roma interviewees report that as a result many are often forced to work in low skilled and poorly (often unregulated) waged employment in the formal and informal economies.
- TEIP Roma interviewees highlighted that many young Roma who have spent their formative years in Britain find that acculturation can bring them into conflict with the traditions and values of older community members and result in limiting their opportunities for achieving full economic and social inclusion.
- TEIP found that a higher percentage of New Traveller interviewees were resident at insecure accommodation compared to the wider G/IT sample. Their accommodation status led to increased risk of disruption to employment if they were evicted or required to move on. New Travellers level of educational attainment was found to be significantly higher than that of other interviewees across all communities.
- New Traveller interviewees cited police harassment and local prejudice as a barrier to greater economic inclusion.

### **Accommodation**

- The shortage of Gypsy and Traveller site provision is a major driver of economic exclusion. A 2009 Equality and Human Rights Commission report highlighted that 'the lack of secure accommodation for nomadic groups remains the lynchpin of a plethora of other inequalities.'
- TEIP identified a dramatic generational shift in Gypsies' and Irish Travellers' traditional accommodation types and lifestyles. Three quarters of G/IT interviewees described their parents as having led a fully nomadic existence for a significant part of their lives. This compares with just over 2 per cent of interviewees who led a fully nomadic existence. These stark findings indicate that nomadism has become less financially viable as an economic strategy for the Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- Over half of the G/IT sample lived in conventional housing. This compares with just below half the G/IT sample who lived on permanent or secure authorised sites. Of this sub-sample of 'sited' respondents, six per cent resided on unauthorised developments with precarious legal status.
- Forty one per cent of the G/IT sample owned their own homes (either sites or houses). This compares with 68 per cent of the wider population who are owner occupiers or who have a mortgage. This contrast maybe viewed as an indication of the degree of financial exclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers.
- Many interviewees stated that they had a good sense of community and were able to access emotional support from neighbours as well as utilising a strong network of social capital built up through connections to their place of residence.
- TEIP found that living on unauthorised encampments/developments can contribute to economic and social exclusion.
- TEIP found that G/IT interviewees and families living in houses were primarily engaged in waged employment.

- In the TEIP survey respondents with more successful businesses in the 'Traveller Economy' had predominantly adopted more sedentary lifestyles (even if they remained living on sites).
- Little evidence was found in the TEIP survey of support for on-site work areas – nearby work areas would be welcomed.
- TEIP found evidence that G/IT interviewees living on Traveller sites faced 'address based' discrimination with a number of interviewees referring to potential employers being unwilling to offer them jobs due to their place of residence.
- TEIP found significant opposition amongst G/IT interviewees to taking out mortgages with one in four of the sample stating they did not want to obtain a mortgage. This compares with 34 per cent of interviewees who reported that they would like to be able to buy a home/obtain a mortgage if they could.
- The Preference amongst G/IT sample was for 'self-provided' private family sites with a quarter of interviewees expressing such a choice. Despite the anxiety and expense of complex planning applications, respondents agreed that once permission was granted, residence on a private site was a significant key to greater financial stability enabling access to increased rates of social and economic inclusion. TEIP interviewees cited discrimination, high land costs and planning restrictions as limiting the scope for wider development of private sites.
- TEIP found that increasing site provision has the potential to create employment opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers. Seven per cent of the G/IT sample were employed in skilled positions in the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation 'industry'.

### Education and Training

- TEIP found a marked difference between interviewee's educational participation and attainment compared to that of their parents. Approximately a third to half of all G/IT interviewees parents had received no formal education compared to just 10 per cent of interviewees themselves who stated they had received no formal education. TEIP posits that increased sedentarism amongst the Gypsy and Traveller communities has led to greater participation and achievement in formal education.
- G/IT interviewees had a varied experience of educational participation with over half the sample having attended formal education (both primary and secondary) on an irregular basis. Conversely 20 per cent of the G/IT had received both primary and secondary education, attending their educational establishments on a regular basis.
- In contrast to the low level of educational attainment of interviewee's parents, 23 per cent of the G/IT interviewees had achieved formal academic qualification (GCSE's/A Levels/Degrees). However, a large section of the G/IT sample (approximately 76 per cent) had no formal qualifications, a figure which compares poorly with the 9 per cent of the 'mainstream' population without qualifications. TEIP would also emphasize that the TEIP sample are those members of the G/IT community who experience greater social and economical inclusion, implying that illiteracy and lack of formal qualifications may be higher amongst Gypsy and Traveller populations as a whole.
- TEIP found that racist bullying acts as a barrier to participation in school with parents often removing children from schools when this occurs. Fifty five per cent of G/IT interviewees experienced bullying and discrimination during their time in education. This figure compares with one third of Black and Asian students who experienced racial discrimination at school, college or university and just 1 per cent of white students.
- TEIP found that many Gypsy and Traveller customs and practices continue to discourage participation in school.



- Several interviewees indicated that certain schools with more experience with Gypsies and Travellers were better able to provide secure and supportive learning environments.
- Amongst TEIP interviewees there was clear evidence of support for curricular reform so that the curriculum offered to Gypsies and Travellers would better reflect the cultural aspirations of their communities.
- TEIP found evidence that the low educational attainment of Gypsies and Travellers in school has the result of making it harder for them to develop and maintain their own businesses including those engaged in the Traveller Economy.
- Approximately one third of the interviewees in the G/IT sample had returned to further/vocational education to improve their literacy skills or gain vocational qualifications. TEIP posits that this trend to return to education reflects Gypsies' and Travellers' enthusiasm for learning and skills development under the appropriate conditions.
- There is growing use of the internet – both socially and for work purposes – amongst Gypsies and Travellers with 60 per cent of the G/IT sample stating they had access to the internet.
- TEIP found growing support for mainstream formal education within the TEIP sample with the majority of interviewees (31) with children strongly supporting the idea of their children remaining in the education system and gaining some form of academic qualification.

## ***Social Capital and Community Relations***

- TEIP found that amongst the G/IT sample 43 per cent of interviewees operated within predominantly 'bonded' (inter-community) social groups whilst a larger sub-set of 48 per cent operated within 'bridging' (intra-community) social groups characterised by wider and more diverse social networks.
- TEIP found that the strengthening of close kin and ethnic group ties amongst Gypsies and Travellers were in part responsive to a sense of fear and mistrust of the wider community who, it was felt, were often hostile to Gypsies and Travellers.
- A high level of the G/IT sample (78 per cent) reported that they had experienced racism in their adult lives. TEIP found that such racist experiences negatively impacted on interviewee's educational, employment and training opportunities.
- The report found that nearly half (46 per cent) of G/IT sample were proud and confident in revealing their identity at work, while a minority (8 per cent) hid their identity in work-based situations.

## ***Concluding Comments and Key messages from the research:***

### ***The Traveller Economy***

- This report has highlighted the huge economical and social potential which can be harnessed by greater targeted support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) businesses. The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Business Links need to ensure they provide the appropriate outreach and guidance to develop GRT businesses.
- Trading Standards should extend and promote its 'registered good practice tradespeople' schemes to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller tradespeople. Building upon emerging good practice (an

existing DVD on 'cold calling') local Trading Standards Offices should develop targeted information and awareness raising activities for Gypsies Roma and Travellers on restrictions on 'cold calling'.

- The Roads to Success report has highlighted the need for the promotion and development of social enterprise and cooperative economic structures within the Traveller Economy. This can be achieved through the development of intercultural fora and dialogue between Gypsy and Traveller groups and other BME and social enterprise organisations.

### **Access to Waged Labour**

- Greater exchange of good practice examples and models e.g. 'positive action', community recruitment, encouraging volunteering, employment of sessional staff and employee support amongst projects employing Gypsies, Roma and Travellers would enhance access to waged work.
- The DWP need to include GRT communities in the categories of ethnic minority groups and provide cultural awareness training for DWP frontline and managerial staff who are working with GRT customers.
- There is a need for targeted initiatives to raise awareness of, and access to, training opportunities amongst those GRT community members in low waged and low skilled employment. Hand in hand with the latter there needs to be initiatives to reduce the occurrence of informal work practices/unemployment and encourage 'regularisation' of work situations.

### **Accommodation**

- There is a need to provide new (and upgraded) site provision through a targeted approach to delivery of accommodation.
- There is an urgent need to promote new types of affordable and inclusive credit for home ownership amongst Gypsies and Travellers (e.g. through Community Land Trusts and other co-operative ventures).
- There is a need to raise awareness amongst Gypsies and Travellers of the economic and social inclusion opportunities of entering into site management/ownership and construction programmes.

### **Education**

- There is a need for greater flexibility in education provision including interactive and practical learning experiences within the school curriculum. There is also potential for targeting post 16 and further education and vocational training for Gypsies and Travellers.
- TEIP recommends that a national (virtual) support network should be established for Gypsies and Travellers in higher education with the long term goal of establishing a wider network of community role models.
- Traveller Education Services (TES) play an essential role in increasing Gypsies', Roma and Travellers' educational participation and attainment. The erosion of TES's is counterproductive to promoting educational inclusion for GRT communities.

### **Social Capital, Community Relations and Good Practice**

- Government departments should support public awareness campaigns drawing attention to the integral socio-economic roles played by Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in local communities throughout the country. The Government should also reinstate funding and support for Gypsies



Roma Traveller History Month.

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission and Trade Unions should ensure that Gypsies, Roma and Travellers employment rights and human rights are promoted and protected.
- There is a need to establish and support greater numbers of localised GRT community groups who can effectively raise the economic and social inclusion status of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers at the local level.

## Glossary of key terms

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**Asset Based Community Development** - It is an approach to community-based development, based on appreciating and mobilising individual and community talents, skills and assets. It is also community-driven development rather than development driven by external agencies

**Economic Inclusion** - Economic inclusion is achieved when families have adequate economic resources and are able to access the full range of opportunities, services and life chances that society has to offer. This means decent employment opportunities, access to business support and training and development initiatives and ability to secure credit and other financial services (ITMB, 2007). Economic inclusion is a central theme of this report.

**Equalities Measurement Framework (EMF)** - the set of 'measurements' and indicators derived by a research team at the London School of Economics on behalf of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. The EMF uses a list of capabilities (for example ability to access a secure place to live, or achieve a good standard of living) and provides a series of elements which can be used to see if particular groups or individuals are able to access these achievable capabilities or are falling behind the standard of living/equalities which would be expected. The measurement framework creates a mechanism for monitoring trends in inequality, exploring the causes of inequality, and identifying possible policy interventions, as well as giving suggestions for, the types of information and analysis which are required to monitor equalities.

**Social Capital** - is a way of describing people's access to networks of support, shared trust, resources and values which help communities and individuals to achieve mutual benefits.

**Social Enterprise** - Businesses set up to tackle a social or environmental need. Rather than focusing on maximising shareholder value, their main aim is to generate profit which can then be used to further their social and environmental goals.

**Social Exclusion** - The Cabinet Office Social Exclusion Task Force provided a definition of social exclusion: "Social exclusion is a short-hand term for what can happen when people or areas have a combination of problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown. These problems are linked and mutually reinforcing. Social exclusion is an extreme consequence of what happens when people do not get a fair deal throughout their lives and find themselves in difficult situations." (cited in Housemark, 2008, 2)

**Theoretical Social Exclusion Models** (see further Levitas, 1998). When discussing why and how some individuals or communities experience social and economic exclusion, three main theoretical models are used. These are often described using the following abbreviations (**MUD**) The 'Moral Underclass Discourse' which blames poverty and social exclusion on people who are excluded ("it's their own fault"); (**SID**) 'Social Integration Discourse' (people are excluded because they don't have the right skills so they need training) (**RED**) 'Redistributive Egalitarian Discourse' this theory states that the way in which society is set up with uneven access to money, contacts and resources is responsible for social exclusion. People with varying political approaches are more likely to prefer a particular explanation for social exclusion so that broadly speaking the more 'left wing' a person is, the more likely they are to adopt the RED explanation which places responsibility for improving people's social inclusion on the state. The more 'right wing' someone is, the more likely they are to prefer the MUD definition which means that the state doesn't have to bear so much responsibility and people should look after themselves.

**Targeted Action** - is the development of a policy or initiative tailored and designed for the specific needs of a particular group.

**Personalised Services** - can involve providing service users with a more 'customer friendly' and personalised way of negotiating their access to and use of services. Personalisation allows service users to have more say in how resources are used, and helps them to become designers and producers of services as well as facilitating 'self-organising solutions' (Hiscock and Stirling, 2009).

## Glossary of key terms

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**Positive Action** - Positive action consists of taking practical steps (e.g. developing specific job opportunities or access to additional financial support for agencies working with particular groups) to support specific socially or economically disadvantaged communities with the purpose of helping them to achieve full and effective equality.

**Social Mobility** - Change of social and economic status linked to changes in work/education and access to resources. 'Upward mobility' is linked to improvements in status, skills and pay and conversely 'downward mobility' is linked to decline in these factors and the narrowing of personal options and choice.

**TEIP** (The Traveller Economic Inclusion Project). TEIP is the partnership research project which set out to explore how and why some Gypsies and Travellers are more 'socially included' than others – how did it happen, what resources (social capitals) and access to finances (economic capital) did they have, and how did they achieve their success. This report discusses the outcomes and findings of the TEIP.

## Acronyms Used

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BSFH -	The British Social Housing Foundation	Ofsted -	Office for Standards in Education
BM -	Black Manifesto	ONS -	Office for National Statistics
CLTs -	Community Land Trusts	PLASC -	Pupil Level Annual School Census
CRE -	Commission for Racial Equality	PCTs -	Primary Care Trusts
CLG -	(Department of) Communities and Local Government	ROTA -	Race on the Agenda
CRE -	Commission for Racial Equality	RSS -	Regional Spatial Strategies
DCSF -	Department for Children, Schools and Families	SEU -	Social Exclusion Unit
DES -	Department for Education and Skills	TES -	Traveller Education Services
DWP -	Department for Work and Pensions		
ECRI -	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance		
ECHR -	European Convention on Human Rights		
EHRC -	Equality and Human Rights Commission		
FFT -	Friends Families and Travellers		
GRT -	Gypsies, Roma and Travellers		
GRTHM -	Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month		
GTANA -	Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments		
GTLRC -	Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition		
HMRC -	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs		
ITMB -	Irish Traveller Movement Britain		
NATT -	National Association of Teachers of Travellers		
NHS -	National Health Service		
ODPM -	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister		

# **ROADS TO SUCCESS**

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS**

**This report presents the findings of research undertaken by The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain together with key partners and collaborators (including Buckinghamshire New University) which explores the strategies used by a sample of Gypsies and Travellers to secure economic inclusion. The Traveller Economic Inclusion Project (TEIP) was funded by the Big Lottery Fund, with the research being carried out between July 2009 and October 2010.**

## Introduction

There are many references to Gypsies and Travellers in the media and popular folklore, unfortunately, most such narratives abound with negative stereotypes of the various communities of travelling people. Despite the wide-spread nature of discussion on Gypsy and Traveller populations, 'public knowledge' about such groups is often limited and flawed (Morris, 2006; Richardson, 2007), focusing predominantly on accommodation issues and ignoring the other domains of exclusion experienced by members of these communities. In recent years a number of important reports e.g. the Institute for Public Policy Research's 'Moving Forward' (Crawley, 2003) the Commission for Racial Equality's 'Common Ground' (2006) and a literature review undertaken on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Cemlyn, et. al., 2009) have done much to move discourse beyond the accommodation issue and highlight the range of extreme social exclusions from which these groups suffer. However, economic issues have been touched upon only briefly within most studies, with Cemlyn et. al. (2009) recommending strongly that further research was required to understand the employment and financial situation of Gypsies and Travellers which, the authors of the 2009 study warned, was likely to become more precarious in the light of the worsening international fiscal circumstances.

It is against this backdrop of relative paucity of knowledge of Traveller economic strategies, the deepening recession and Cemlyn et. al.'s (2009) call for further research that the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project (TEIP) has been undertaken.

The resulting TEIP report sheds a clearer light on one facet of the inequalities facing many

Gypsy and Traveller families, namely that economic exclusion and the numerous hurdles to be overcome for community members seeking to enhance their economic well-being. This spotlight on employment and financial issues concentrates in part on exploring the links between access to work and other variables which for many communities are taken for granted - specifically accommodation, education and engagement the wider 'mainstream' community. Thus this study offers discussion on the interplay between social inclusion, culture and identity within the context of equalities and access to financial stability.

In addition to considering the economic circumstances faced by Gypsy and Traveller communities and exploring how some individuals have overcome significant social and economic exclusion, this report also sets out to counteract the widespread negative myths which present members of these communities as people who will only work in certain jobs, who do not pay taxes, and who are unwilling to 'mix' with other communities or people. As will be shown, the reality is vastly different from the mythology, with Gypsies and Travellers adapting and challenging stereotypes whilst seeking equality of opportunity with surrounding populations.

This report is particularly timely as at the time of writing Europe is facing a significant economic recession with many countries beset by financial difficulties and concomitant anti-migrant rhetoric which is playing out in a number of countries as 'anti-Gypsyism' (Sigona & Threhan, 2010) specifically, racism against Roma, and other non-sedentary peoples and a retrenchment of employment opportunities which has particularly negative impacts on vulnerable members of these populations

The report which has emerged from the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project (referred to hereafter as 'TEIP') focuses predominantly on Gypsies and Travellers who have achieved a measure of economic and social inclusion, albeit that in some cases such economic 'success' is relatively modest with a number of interviewees still experiencing profound hardship in certain aspects of their life (e.g. access to secure accommodation; health inequalities, etc). 'Success' within the context of Gypsy and Traveller discourse pertaining to economic, and social inclusion is a highly contextualized,

variable and contested term; with the precise meaning of 'success' often being dependent upon cultural understandings and the outlook of the individual participant.

Thus, as we show in more depth elsewhere in the report, an interviewee may within Gypsy and Traveller terms be regarded as successful and economically secure, as a result of working with family members or other Travellers in a small scale business or social enterprise operation, whilst simultaneously regarded in 'mainstream' society as less obviously economically included and lacking certain basic amenities or opportunities. Other interviewees however, have attained high levels of success across numerous domains (both intra-cultural 'traditional Traveller practices/economies' and in 'mainstream' terms), achieving professional and financial recognition for their work and also the acclaim of members of their own communities who recognise the 'authenticity' of their financial inclusion strategies and that they have not become acculturated by success – a concern which has resonance throughout much of this report. Thus, the nature of 'success' within Gypsy and Traveller communities is variable and works on several layers – with economic and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, (1992) successfulness interwoven and yet potentially discrete.

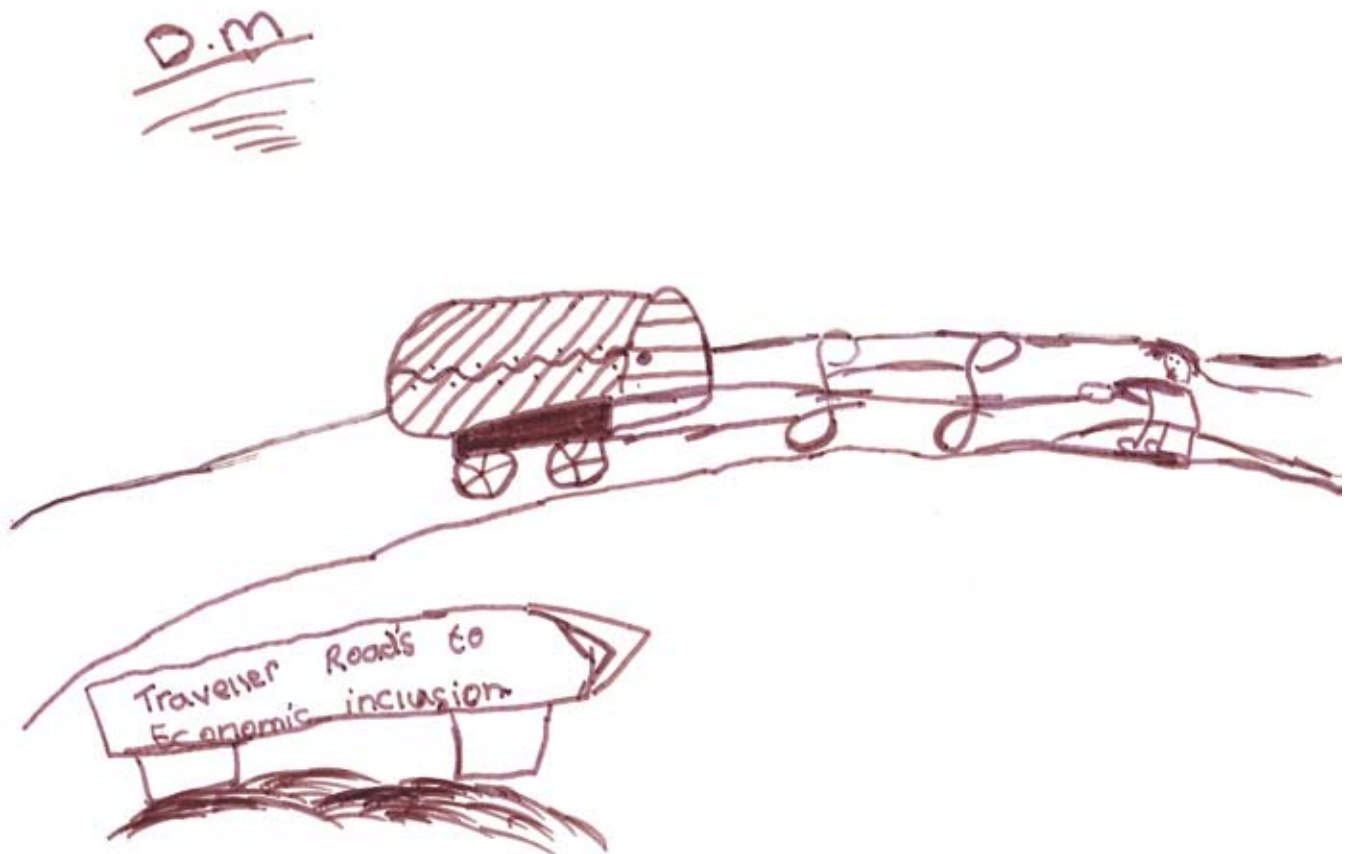
This report however is less interested in rehearsing the narratives of exclusion so common to policy practitioners when exploring the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers and is primarily interested in 'positives' and ways in which community members are able to achieve and experience inclusion and success on their own terms. Accordingly, in contrast to a number of studies which focus on exclusion, the TEIP has sought to investigate the other side of the story, namely what is 'working', how access to capitals (social, economic and cultural) occurs, and what adopted life strategies or access to external support from community groups, local institutions and the state have proved beneficial in supporting the economic inclusion of Gypsy and Traveller interviewees.

The vibrancy and strength of Gypsy and Traveller communities is demonstrated within this report which provides insights into how and why these populations have adapted and survived despite the wide-spread antagonism of wider society and the barriers to be overcome before success can be measured (Cemlyn et al, 2010). The TEIP has sought to link the adopted

life strategies of the interviewees to the wider national policy context, examining the degree to which 'successful' Gypsies and Travellers have benefited from state and community support, exploring the impact (and potential) of policy reform and changing circumstances (e.g the implementation of Equalities Legislation) on community achievement. In undertaking this study, the project team have adhered to best practice in community development and inclusive policy practice and present the report which follows as a tool for promoting a 'change' agenda which follows the traditions of Participatory Action Research in both the methods used, and by seeking to use the outcomes to enhance the circumstances of research participant communities.

### ***Andrew Ryder and Margaret Greenfields***

When reading the report please note that the following convention is used in relation to use of quotations. After each quotation the speaker is identified by age range (in broad bands), gender (M or F) and ethnicity (G for Gypsy; IT for Irish Traveller; R for Roma or NT for New Traveller). We do this so that it is possible to consider how the experiences of interviewees might vary because of their age or whether they are a man or woman, or because of membership of a particular community. Thus an English Gypsy woman aged 26 would be identified after her quotation by the code (G F 21-30)



# **Chapter One**

***Gypsies, Travellers and Economic Inclusion***



## **Part One - Policy and Research Approaches**

### **Chapter One - Gypsies, Travellers and Economic Inclusion**

This chapter provides a brief overview of a range of inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers in the UK, with a specific focus on economic and social exclusion. This section of the report not only considers some causes of exclusion but also State policy responses and differing and evolving life strategies adopted by Gypsies and Travellers to mitigate the worst impacts of such exclusion. In the process of considering these topics we pose a series of 'key questions' to which it is hoped this report provides some answers.

Defining Gypsies, Roma and Travellers as a group is a problematic task. The two predominant communities in the UK are Romany (English) Gypsies and Irish Travellers. Other nomadic (or formerly nomadic) groups include European Roma, New Travellers, Welsh Gypsies, and Scottish Gypsy-Travellers. Although all of these groups currently (or in the past) followed a nomadic way of life and therefore have some similarities of life-style and perhaps behaviours, it is important to distinguish between the different communities. In this report we concentrate on English Gypsies and Irish Travellers as the two main groups in England where this research was undertaken.

Linguistic evidence suggests that Romany Gypsies left India as a community over a thousand years ago, gradually traveling across the Middle East and arriving in Europe in the fourteenth century (Kenrick, 2004). The reception afforded to these travelling groups by local communities included initial welcome (in response to their skills and 'exoticism') followed by persecution and in many countries, expulsion and exclusion. (Fraser 1992; Hancock 1987; Kenrick and Bakewell 1995). The first record of Gypsies in Britain dates from 1502 in Scotland and in England from 1514 (Bancroft 2005). Roma populations across Europe are members of the same ethno-social group as British Romany Gypsies, but whose ancestors had settled in other European countries (predominantly in

Central and Eastern Europe) earlier in the migration process which culminated in this population reaching the UK and thence America/Canada.

In the United Kingdom (UK) the term 'Gypsy' (unlike on the continent) is still widely accepted by community members, whereas in contrast, outside of Britain, 'Roma' is the preferred in-group designation for these populations. Where the term 'Roma' is used within this report (specifically in Chapter 7) we use it to refer to Central and East European Roma migrants to Britain.

'New Travellers' (also discussed separately in Chapter 7) are members of a relatively recent traveling community who (unlike the other groups referred to above) are not members of an ethnic minority, but who have themselves opted to live a nomadic lifestyle (see further Clarke and Greenfields, 2006). A small comparative sample of Roma and New Travellers have participated in the TEIP study and their experiences are detailed separately to enable a contrasting view of the economic inclusion experiences of communities from beyond the main groups of traveling people. In choosing to include a sample of these two populations, the TEIP has made an explicit political choice which identifies the benefit to Gypsy, Roma and, Traveller groups of exploring commonality of experiences and also divergence and innovation which may lead to sharing of knowledge.

It is widely accepted in Britain that the terms 'Gypsy' or 'Roma' do not include the indigenous Celtic nomadic groups, e.g. Irish and Scottish Travellers (McVeigh 1997). In this report we use the umbrella term 'Gypsies and Travellers' to distinguish between the main groups considered within this study, but in so doing we recognise the problem of the imposition of a simplistic eponym on a wide range of diverse travelling communities.

Although both Gypsies and Travellers have differing origins and cultural traditions there are some striking similarities between the two populations. Both groups have their own distinct community languages, Anglo-Romanes (spoken by Gypsies) and Shelta/Gammon used by Irish Travellers. Both groups maintain strict rituals of cleanliness and hygiene (Mayall, 1996, 8), operate within close-knit family structures, have strong nomadic traditions which are facing erosion as a result of sedentarist policies and favour working patterns organised around kin-groups and self-employment. The strong traditions of in-family socialisation and employment related training preferred by both Gypsies and Irish Travellers has at times acted

as a barrier to participation in formal education (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). However, perhaps the closest similarity between Gypsies, Travellers (and indeed the other nomadic groups referred to in this report) is a common experience of racism, exclusion and exposure to a largely hostile sedentary majority, which rarely make any distinction between the different communities, regarding them all in the main as 'undesirables' to be kept as far away as possible (see further Richardson, 2006). The theme of sedentarisation, hostility and Gypsy and Traveller responses to such experiences (including preference for inter-community employment) are returned to further below.

### ***Gypsies, Travellers and Social Exclusion***

When discussing social exclusion within this report, the TEIP is predicated on an understanding of the phenomenon as multidimensional, containing economic, geographic, generational, racial and gender dimensions. Throughout this report when discussing the exclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers we have used as a working definition, the Social Exclusion Unit/Cabinet Office description of 'social exclusion which states:

"Social exclusion is a short-hand term for what can happen when people or areas have a combination of problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown. These problems are linked and mutually reinforcing. Social exclusion is an extreme consequence of what happens when people do not get a fair deal throughout their lives and find themselves in difficult situations." (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998)

Whilst social exclusion involves a complex set of circumstances, a major element of 'deep exclusion' is lack of adequate financial resources (which may include no or limited access to loans and banking facilities); low-pay and un or under-employment – the elements which combine to create 'economic exclusion' or the situation where a group or neighbourhood experiences a relatively lower standard of income than does the surrounding majority population.

It is the premise of this report – based upon the limited evidence collected in a review of a series of Gypsy Traveller and other Needs Assessment

datasets (see further Appendix B) and the findings from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission review (Cemlyn et. al., 2009) that the majority of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain experience 'economic exclusion' alongside the other domains of exclusion discussed below.

It has long been accepted that Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most excluded groups in society (CRE, 2006) across a series of domains. It is calculated that life-expectancy is around 10–12 years less for Gypsies and Travellers than for members of the settled community (Parry et. al., 2004). Members of these populations also experience profound educational disadvantage, including higher rates of exclusion from school settings than other groups of young people (Ryder and Cemlyn, 2010). Educational achievement for many Gypsies and Travellers (the routes into economic inclusion for many people) are worryingly poor, with only 15.6% Irish Travellers and 14 % Gypsy/ Roma achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSEs or GNVQs qualifications in 2007 compared to 59.3% of all pupils (DCSF 2008). There are also reports of growing unemployment and welfare dependency amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities (CRE, 2004; Cemlyn et. al, 2009). In common with other (non-Gypsy/Traveller) sectors of society who experience deep social exclusion and deprivation, evidence is suggestive that there has been an increase in involvement in crime, alcohol and drug abuse amongst marginalised Gypsies and Travellers (Power, 2004; Mathews, 2008).

### ***Causes of Gypsy and Traveller Exclusion***

As is discussed in more depth elsewhere in this report, a close linkage exists between accommodation, employment opportunities, increased 'professionalisation' of work and associated expectations that all staff will hold qualifications and the decline in Gypsy and Traveller social and economic inclusion. The impacts of rapid post-war urbanisation marked the beginning of the decline of opportunities for many traveling people with the development and building on of open spaces traditionally used for halting sites from where people could seek work, combined with greater restrictions on parking on farmland and privately owned land. This movement to restrict 'unlicensed' caravan sites (which commenced with the 1960 Control and Development of Caravan Sites Act and increased the pressure on

sites with each subsequent wave of legislation), has created a severe shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites with predictable impacts for traveling people's ability to access work. The shortage of site accommodation has been exacerbated by widespread discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers and the reluctance of planning authorities to grant permission for residential sites. When combined with a policy failure caused by long-term central and local government inertia (Richardson and Ryder 2010) the situation has developed until approximately one in four caravan dwelling Gypsies and Travellers (approximately eight percent of the total members of these communities) have no authorised place to live and are thus technically homeless (Johnson and Willers, 2007).

Even where Gypsies and Travellers are able to obtain planning permission it is not uncommon for them to reside in highly marginalised spaces (Cemlyn et al 2009) or to be subject to planning restrictions which create significant problems in working from home. Still others (those without access to a site) experience frequent eviction (Morris and Clements, 2002; Clark and Greenfields, 2006) which impacts on both work and educational opportunities. As a response to site shortages, increasing numbers of community members have been forced to live in 'conventional housing' leading to the break-up of social networks, corresponding isolation and stresses on mental health (Shelter, 2007; Greenfields and Smith, 2011; Matthews, 2008). All of these factors have been important elements which have undermined the economic base and work networks of some Gypsies and Travellers as well as exacerbating poor access to services and training which might have helped to assist members of these communities in re-establishing new employment opportunities (CRE, 2006; Cemlyn et. al., 2009).

### **Economic and Bureaucratic Restrictions on Gypsy and Traveller Employment Opportunities**

In addition to the accommodation related restrictions noted above, post-war economic change has also had a disproportionately negative impact on Gypsies and Travellers as ever-increasing mechanisation of agricultural practices has eroded the centuries old symbiotic relationship between Gypsies and Travellers and the farming community (Clark and Greenfields, 2006).

Reported increased competition for seasonal and manual work by economic migrants from Eastern Europe (Home and Greenfields, 2006) has added still further to the decline in employment in the sector of traditional farm labour. Whilst the relatively recent changing pattern of employment in Britain have also had a devastating impact on many other communities who work largely in manual trades, we would argue that the juxtaposition of loss of employment related accommodation (parking up on farms during harvest seasons), the closure of traditional stopping places and sites and diminished employment opportunities has led to particularly deep marginalisation for members of the travelling communities. The literature on Gypsies and Travellers and accommodation needs assessments (GTANA) has highlighted that the opportunity for Gypsies and Travellers to work in traditional modes of employment is being increasingly limited by State regulation of the workplace (Greenfields and Home, 2006). For example, legislative and bureaucratic restrictions on casual labour and 'cold calling' (Cemlyn et. al., 2009) have had an adverse effect on Gypsies and Travellers' economic practices. Difficulties in complying with regulations are compounded by poor levels of educational achievement and school participation (it was suggested within the London-wide GTANA), which means many Gypsies and Travellers fail to fully understand or conform with the plethora of regulations that govern working practices, health and safety requirements or enable trades people to issue relevant certification which is typically required for householders to be able to make an insurance claim or satisfy building regulation requirements (Fordhams, 2008, 80).

Local authority site restrictions, which bar economic activities (for example scrapping, or storage of work vehicles) on nearly seventy percent of public sites (Niner, 2003) have also had a significant impact on occupants' economic inclusion and ability to engage with particular forms of preferred self-employment (ITMB, 2007; Johnson and Willers 2007). Whilst undertaking the TEIP, analysis of 36 GTANA reports was conducted to provide supporting evidence in relation to economic activities undertaken by TEIP participants and their wider peer group across England as reported to GTANA enumerators. A brief discussion on the findings from this analysis is included in Appendix B. An additional hurdle to economic inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers consists of the structural barriers

many community members face in engaging with mainstream financial services and sources of credit (Runnymede Trust, 2008). Most paid employment (and also householders' or contractors' expectations relating to use of a tradesperson) require access to a bank account. For Gypsies and Travellers who are highly mobile, frequent changes of address, use of paid 'up-front' gas bottle charges or a generator for the provision of electricity rather than quarterly power bills attached to a fixed address, lead to a range of associated difficulties in proving place of residence and/or credit worthiness. These can combine to create an insurmountable hurdle to opening a bank account, or even gaining motor vehicle insurance or 'cover' for theft or damage of tools and associated health or liability insurances (Cemlyn et al, 2009). For Gypsies and Travellers these disadvantages not only impede their ability to secure loans and mortgages but can also act as a burden which limits their opportunities for business growth and the ability to secure a stable home base (ITMB, 2007).

The structural barriers to economic and social inclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers arise from a combination of residence in a post-modern society which is predicated on an assumption of sedentarism, and deep rooted institutional racism which fails to take account of the cultural differences and specific needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities. It has been argued that such institutional and enacted racism towards Gypsies and Travellers is often linked to perceptions that people with a nomadic lifestyle are 'outside' of the norms and control of dominant societal discourse (McVeigh, 1997) and therefore that sedentary society does not owe them the same duty of care as is required to people who are regarded as 'within' the system. Thus, speaking in 2004, the Chair of the (then extant) Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips; noted that:

*"Discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers appears to be the last 'respectable' form of racism. It is still considered acceptable to put up 'No Traveller' signs in pubs and shops and to make blatantly prejudiced remarks about Gypsies and Travellers" (BBC 17th October, 2004).*

Six years after this statement was made, whilst perhaps less blatant hostility with regard to visible denial of access to services is seen, little seems to have improved for members of these

communities in the sense of employment related discrimination. Both Cemlyn, (2009) and GTANA evidence (see Appendix B) report that direct discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers still occurs in recruitment practices. Greenfields (2008) found evidence of Travellers experiencing racist stereotyping at work leading to constructive dismissal for which no compensation was sought as a result of lack of knowledge of remedies. The London accommodation needs assessment noted that a quarter of those interviewed who lived on sites felt they had suffered employment discrimination on account of their address (Fordhams, 2008, 80).

As noted at the beginning of this report, the timing of this study is particularly apposite in the sense of enabling a review of Gypsy and Traveller employment options and strategies. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and Government report 'Monitoring the impact of the recession' (EHRC et al, 2009) states that in the recession during the 1990s ethnic minorities were disproportionately affected in terms of rates of job loss and speed of becoming unemployed. Thus the current recession which began in 2009 may potentially herald the prelude to greater levels of fiscal and social exclusion for marginalised Gypsies and Travellers.

The 2009 attacks on Romanian Roma in Belfast (Guardian, 28th July 2009; Reuters, 18th August 2009) and the increase in hostility to this group in France and Italy and elsewhere in Europe in the months since the start of the financial crisis (Guardian, 17th September 2010) are, sadly, likely to be symptomatic of the increased community tensions and 'scapegoating' of visible minorities that are often generated in a recession. Accordingly, monitoring of the ways in which the recession impacts on Gypsy and Traveller relations to and within the wider community may provide insight into the degree of civic relations currently existing within Britain.

### **Policy Responses to Gypsy and Traveller Economic Exclusion in Europe**

Throughout Europe Gypsies, Travellers and Roma face economic and social exclusion. Whilst this report does offer a forum for discussing the wide-spread discrimination and racism experienced by members of these



communities, we explicitly reject one form of theoretical explanation for this wide-spread prejudice and social exclusion – that pertaining to the Moral Underclass Debate (MUD, see further Levitas, 1998) which explicitly blames people and groups who are excluded for their own poverty, accusing them of lacking the will to engage with society and obtain employment. In Europe, policy makers engaging with Roma have generally preferred to adopt the Skills Integration Discourse (SID, Levitas, 1998) which recommends that access to training will lessen the plight of socially excluded communities through providing them with appropriate skills to enter the labour market and compete with other members of society on equal terms (Ryder, 2002; Helleiner, 2003; European Roma Rights Centre, 2002). Whilst this aim is laudable, in practice, the juxtaposition of employment training and associated assimilation policies have led to Gypsies/Roma and Travellers being placed in profoundly dislocated working and social environments for which they are not fitted, or supported in making the transition. Roma report that they have often been given little say in the orientation of new lifestyles, and there have been predictably negative results. Placed in new and often ghettoised housing estates which are often at the edges of cities, presented with a limited choice between accepting low paid and unskilled manual labour or applying for welfare payments, and with the fragmentation of traditional support networks and practices leading to isolation, cultural trauma and welfare dependency, some Gypsies/Roma and Travellers have found themselves in a more perilous situation than when they were self-employed and living in poorer quality marginalized accommodation (Stewart, 1997; Blasco, 1999; Arnstberg, 1998).

In Britain, whilst the policy responses have been more nuanced, the preference has still been for 'upskilling' Gypsies and Travellers to fit in with mainstream models of employment and education, rather than exploring an appropriately hybridized way of working which could offer simple and yet effective ways of change through partnership.

### **Policy Responses in the UK**

Whilst decades of assimilationist policies in the UK have had a negative impact on the economic and accommodation situation of many members of these communities, the wide-

ranging Labour administration policy review of Gypsy and Traveller issues which began in the early 2000s has brought about some positive changes which take account of the specific needs of these populations. The following policies and schemes which have impacted on Gypsy and Traveller economic inclusion in recent years have been taken into consideration when framing this report and recommendations for policy change. Further details are included within the main text as appropriate:

- \* The development and decline of Traveller Education Services

- \* Educational curricular reform and the move towards individualised learning and academic flexibility

- \* 'Supporting People' Services

- \* The Housing Act 2004 and Planning Circular 1/2006 that created an obligation for local authorities to assess levels of accommodation need and identify land which would be suitable for site development. Although Regional level targets for the provision of sites/pitches have been rescinded since the election of a new administration in May 2010, the duties to assess need still exists.

- \* The incremental raising of the age at which a young person may exit education or skills training to eighteen (Education and Skills Act 2008)

- \* The development of the 'Working Together: UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion' (DWP, 2008)

- \* The enactment of the Single Equality Act 2009 which creates a single equality duty that governs the various equalities strands, including race, gender, disability and poverty. In particular, this piece of legislation enables 'positive action' to occur in employment settings.

Targets and programmes for raising the labour market participation levels of long term unemployed people (Welfare Reform Bill 2009)

Whilst a change of political administration and the financial deficit facing Britain means that some of these policies have been discontinued or 'shelved' as a result of shifting policy directions, we refer throughout the report to policies which have had an impact on new economic directions for Gypsies and Travellers

or which were current during the period when the research was being undertaken.

We would note however that the outgoing Labour administration's targets for Gypsy site construction appear to be at risk of discontinuation (CLG, 2010) and would express concerns that loss of such provision may deepen the economic plight of some members of the community. Moreover, it has been suggested that financial deficit reduction at a local level is accelerating the erosion of Traveller Education Services, a process that was apparent under the previous government (Cemlyn and Ryder, 2010) and which if it continues is likely to have profound impacts on the ability of community members to achieve equality.

In contrast, in some fields of work, a continuation of the previous administration's policies remain clear (for example, 'welfare-to-work' schemes and the personalisation of services – see further -The Cabinet Office, 2010). In the present state of policy flux the key question of whether new and emerging policy approaches will assist the economic and social inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers remains unanswerable, although in concluding this report an attempt is made to make use of the collected data to evaluate the effectiveness and potential of the above policy initiatives in the light of rapidly changing circumstances.

***Key Questions explored within the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project include:***

\* To what degree have Gypsies and Travellers been assisted in attaining economic inclusion by recent policy initiatives?

\* Where can existing or recent policies be reformed or amended/ implemented to facilitate greater economic inclusion for members of these communities?

***Policy Engagement and Empowerment - Opportunities for Change***

This report and the processes of community partnership research through which it has evolved are part of an explicitly politicised process of encouraging policy engagement by Gypsies and Travellers (see further Chapter 2 for a discussion on research paradigms and philosophy). We argue that only through engaging with policy processes and entering into dialogue with policy makers can Gypsies and Travellers ensure that their wishes, voices and community knowledge are fed into the process of legislative and policy change.

Historically Gypsy and Traveller involvement in decision making processes has been limited. This has been attributed to a combination of Governmental inertia but also to the nature of Gypsy and Traveller society which traditionally utilises thick 'bonding' capital and tends to be inward facing rather than engaging with external agencies. Typical (and understandable in the light of centuries of exclusion and discrimination) Gypsy and Traveller suspicions of authority combined with a lack of resources and capacity building support has resulted in political disempowerment for members of these communities (Task Group, 2007). Arthur Ivatts (Government advisor on Gypsy and Traveller education) provides an insightful comment on this topic:

"The process of inclusion cannot be rushed and must depend on negotiated inclusion, in that both the group to be included and the including society, can agree a set of terms and conditions for inclusion without any coercion by the includers. Inclusion should not be secured under duress but only with the willing consent of the Traveller communities" (Ivatts, 2005, 6).

Whilst the process of developing pathways to policy engagement between community members and Central and Local Government remains relatively slow, a number of key engagement processes have been undertaken in the past few years. These include the following:

\* Community engagement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and subsequently Communities and Local Government (ODPM/CLG) policy review

\* Communities and Local Government (CLG) twice yearly engagement/ policy meetings with Gypsies and Travellers to disseminate information on policy initiatives

\* The formation of a Gypsy/Traveller Task Group chaired by Sir Brian Briscoe and the publication in 2007 of 'The Road Ahead: Final Report of the Independent Task Group on Site Provision and Enforcement for Gypsies and Travellers'

\* A Department of Children, Schools and Families Gypsy and Traveller Forum formed in 2009 to facilitate communication and engagement with community members

To date, most policy engagement initiatives have focused on accommodation issues with very little consideration being given to ways of developing economic inclusion mechanisms. However, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has also held a few ad hoc meetings on Travellers on this topic. Noteworthy examples of such policy engagement and consultation practices include a meeting between the DWP Minister for State Jim Murphy MP and a delegation of Traveller groups in 2007 and a joint DWP/ITMB seminar in the same year (ITMB, 2007). Reference to the 2007 seminar is the only identification of Traveller economic inclusion issues within UK National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2008 -10 (DWP, 2008).

It is unfortunate that despite these early promising signs of Governmental willingness to engage with Gypsy and Traveller communities greater steps have not been taken to comply with recommendations and practices emerging from Europe, as Roma participation has been crucial to the design and monitoring of 'European Decade of Roma Inclusion' initiatives and resultant national plans in a number of countries.

When considering mechanisms for enhancing Gypsy and Traveller empowerment as part of a broad social inclusion strategy, we would suggest that a number of opportunities have unfortunately been missed which could have acted to pump-prime community engagement with policy makers and assist in shaping responsive programmes for change. Whilst we recognise that the changing policy map is likely to lead to a retrenchment of resources and refocusing of approaches, we would suggest that the emergence of the 'Big Society' agenda may enable new opportunities which

can assist Gypsy and Traveller communities in developing economic and social strategies and becoming empowered through recognition as a community of interest.

In recent years the (previous) Government has broadly focused on 'consultation' rather than exploiting mechanisms of 'citizen governance' which increase community involvement on boards and forums and provide communities with a 'voice' in the design and production of policies. We would propose that marrying the current administration's 'Big Society' approach to the promotion of 'asset based community development' would enhance community empowerment through enabling Gypsy and Traveller led social enterprises such as those discussed in Chapter 11 to take a clear lead in developing the skills of future leaders and social entrepreneurs by utilising internal community expertise rather than importing skills from external sources. Charlotte Young (of the 'School for Social Entrepreneurs') in discussing the mechanisms and added value of such a community development approach to working with marginalised groups, noted that:

"[an asset based community development] approach based on small scale, community based, bottom up initiatives is the best way to break a persistent cycle of deprivation, but this is not about communities being given a 'say' about the services they receive but about encouraging people within communities to exercise leadership and create their own solutions to lived problems" (Guardian, 10th September 2008).

Within the TEIP report we explore the barriers and solutions to undertaking this model of working with community members, present examples of successful social enterprises initiated by Gypsies and Travellers and ask how these projects can best be replicated to assist in 'growing' greater numbers of skilled people who can act as role models and living 'community assets'.

### **Key Questions:**

*\* To what degree have Gypsies and Travellers been involved in designing and coordinating projects to support economic inclusion?*

*\* How great has community input been into developing governance structures in public and private economic inclusion arenas?*

### **Targeted Action and 'Personalised Services'**

A relatively recent development which has been found to be effective in engaging 'hard to reach' or marginalised communities involves the use of 'targeted action' and personalisation of services – both offering opportunities to tailor and design services for groups who exist outside of the 'mainstream'.

Targeted Action involves designing services which meet the highly specific needs of a particular group to enable them to achieve desired outcomes. In essence, 'targeted action' approaches are in harmony with minority rights philosophical approaches, which propose developing social policies which are culturally sensitive and targeted to the needs of a minority (EU, 2008, 69). This mode of engagement is typically related to 'integrative-managerialist' centralised policy development (Hiscock and Stirling, 2009) designed to place minorities such as Gypsies and Travellers on an equal footing with majority society through the mainstreaming of services and encouragement for minorities to engage with a 'one-size-fits-all' services.

Although limited research evidence exists on economic inclusion models for Gypsies and Travellers, Noonan (1994), evaluating work undertaken in West Belfast found that mainstream training initiatives in the locality had failed to attract Travellers, a situation which was in stark contrast to several highly successful skills-development programmes implemented in Europe and Southern Ireland which were explicitly culturally attuned (Noonan, 1994). In a study commissioned by the UK Irish Employment and Training Consortium Gaffney states "Irish Travellers are a group with very specific needs requiring a highly tailored approach" (Gaffney, 2000). We would suggest that the same observation is likely to hold true for other traveling peoples in Britain.

Use of 'Personalised Services' offers scope for communities and individuals to have greater say in the design and delivery of services of which they make use – ranging from personal social care to employment and training facilities.

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facilities. Emerging employment policy in this field thus creates the potential for innovative service providers to work in partnership with third sector agencies, potential employers and individuals (McNeil, 2009) to deliver a tailored and community assertive extension to targeted approaches (e.g. initiatives aimed at particular groups). Thus (for example) potentially enabling social enterprises to meet the training needs of small groups of Traveller young people in a specified area, utilizing pre-existing networks, skills and facilities to deliver cost-effective high-quality, culturally-appropriate workforce (and 'into work') development programmes.

The theme of localism has been endorsed and boosted by the Coalition Government (elected 2010) with an enhanced emphasis on devolution to local decision making procedures, a circumstance which provides new opportunities for innovative economic inclusion responses. However, despite the scope for Local Authorities and their strategic partners to enhance Gypsy and Traveller social inclusion whilst fulfilling the requirement to deliver Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements which set out local priorities (Bartlett, 2009) significant political will is required to bring about positive change. At the time of writing, cuts of 27% to local authority budgets have been announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review (HM Treasury, 2010). In June 2010 the Coalition Government announced the abolition of regional assemblies and Regional Spatial Strategies, which had provided the statutory framework for increased site provision targets following GTANA (CLG, 29th August 2010) and in October 2010 it was announced that Planning Circular 1/06 (guidance on the provision of planning permission for Gypsy sites) would be revoked (Hansard, 2010). Accordingly, given the link between accommodation and economic inclusion explored within this report, a risk exists that many Gypsies and Travellers could become at greater risk of marginalisation if explicit strategic and policy linkage is not made to these factors within local authority Equality Schemes.



## Positive Action

One significant route to economic inclusion (which can be effectively combined with personalisation and targeted action), consists of utilising Positive Action techniques. As will be shown within the TEIP report, this mode of action has been particularly efficient in up-skilling community members and moving them into paid employment. Positive Action can include controversial mechanisms ('hard forms') such as a providing restricted training schemes which are only open to members of a disadvantaged group (European Commission, 2007), or preferential treatment within employment (TRAILER, 2006). 'Soft forms' of positive action however are less challenging, and include specifically welcoming applicants from disadvantaged groups without eroding the prerogatives of wider society.

A range of positive action tools, include mentoring and championing schemes, outreach work to engage with marginalised groups, access to training and confidence building, targeted recruitment, target setting (numbers of a specific community to be employed) and reviewing services to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of excluded minority communities (EU, 2009, 41).

Positive action is sanctioned in European law (EU Race Directive, 2000, Article 5) although in Britain these measures are not widely used (TRAILER, 2006). It is argued that Positive Action holds the potential to lead to increased employment of Roma and Travellers in certain roles, as although access to employment is based on open recruitment and selection by individual merit, the key positive action mechanism lies within the selection criteria which (as demonstrated in a number of case studies and individual narratives considered within this report) include a demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, the issues which affect these groups and a demonstrated ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with group members (Murphy, 2001, 12).

Positive action should not be confused with 'Affirmative Action' which, (most commonly in America), can be used to promote a quota system. Such a form of positive discrimination has been rejected as unlawful within the EU with the exception of ensuring enhanced representation for people with certain

disabilities and to a lesser extent to equalise gender representation (EU, 2009, 24).

The Equality Act 2010 facilitates positive action by allowing employers to take workforce under-representation into account when selecting between two equally qualified candidates. The Act offers great scope for improving the circumstances of Gypsies and Travellers in many domains, as the benefits of the legislation extend beyond employment and enable agencies to adopt voluntary positive action measures to alleviate 'disadvantage experienced by people who share a protected characteristic, reduce underrepresentation in relation to particular activities, and meet particular needs' (Clause 152), providing such measures are a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim. (NEP Briefing, 2009).

Given the legacy of under and unemployment amongst Gypsies and Travellers it is recommended that increased discussion on, and application of, positive action and 'personalised services' should be endorsed by equalities champions as a matter of policy as a cost-effective and efficient way of increasing the number of community members employed in specialised service delivery posts -particularly those at the interface of traveling communities and mainstream service providers e.g education, healthcare, culture and community mediation.

### Key Questions:

Should targeted measures, 'personalised services' and positive action be more widely adopted in the UK as explicit policy approaches in working with Gypsies and Travellers?

Can these approaches effectively enhance economic inclusion for members of the travelling communities?

Where these measures have been implemented what have been the outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers who engage with services?

### The Traveller Economic Inclusion Project - Adaptation and Access to Capitals

Having outlined some causes of and potential policy responses to Gypsy and Traveller economic exclusion we turn now to a theoretical and practical consideration of how inclusion may be achieved for communities at

the margins of society. In seeking to answer this question the TEIP considered.

\* The mechanisms used by some Gypsies and Travellers to achieve economic and professional success.

\* Schemes and initiatives (central Government, voluntary sector or individually initiated) that have assisted Gypsies and Travellers in achieving economic success.

\* Cost-effective and efficient actions that local and Central Government and other agencies may undertake to improve the economic inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers.

An important facet of the TEIP has been a consideration of the effectiveness of differing life strategies adopted by Gypsies and Travellers in the face of dramatic post-war economic and social change. Acton, writing in (1974) devised a typology which reflected the various strategies then adopted by Gypsies and Travellers. Over thirty years later, it is suggested that his model still remains effective in explaining adaptive practices adopted by participants in the TEIP.

**Table 1 - Gypsy and Traveller Adaptation and Responses to Changing Society**

<b>Conservatism</b>
Gypsies minimise their cultural contact with the outside world and either oppose or are apathetic to any change in their way of life. 'Stasis'
<b>Cultural Adaptation</b>
Gypsies accept influences from other cultures but as a bonus rather than as a replacement. Nationalist tendencies (identification with Britain/England rather than accepting a pan-European Roma identity) among Gypsies operate as a form of cultural adaptation, as they seek a new status within the host society 'insider' rather than 'nomadic outsider'.
<b>Passing</b>
Gypsies decide to compete with 'gorgios' (non-Gypsies) on their own terms, concealing their ethnic origins. This is essentially 'integration by individual decision'.
<b>Cultural Disintegration</b>
Gypsies become impoverished and demoralised, losing self-respect and self-confidence. The collapse of their economy destroys the will to resist the dominant cultural perspectives of the host society. Evidence from studies (such as Cemlyn et. al., 2009) indicate that some marginalised community members are at heightened risk of depression, substance abuse, extreme poverty, and associated negative impacts which may have a damaging effect on Gypsy and Traveller society.

(adapted from Acton, T., (1974) *Gypsy Politics and Social Change*, Routledge, pp35-36). London

In considering the adaptive life strategies utilised by participants, it is important to consider the intersection between group behaviours and access to social capital.

Bourdieu (1992) the leading theorist on access to networks of power, regarded 'social capital' (broadly speaking access to goodwill and support and membership of a network of people who share similar values and beliefs – e.g. family, friends, co-religionists and work colleagues) as just one variable that can contribute to well-being and status. Within Bourdieu's framework, 'cultural capital' or success in mainstream education systems which translates exam results into success in the job market (Jenkins, 2007) is just as important in ensuring that an individual remains linked into society and achieves 'success' in mainstream terms.

For Bourdieu, who draws upon the work of Ivan Illich (1999) and Paolo Friere (1970) the educational curriculum advantages those young people who are already affluent and familiar with educational expectations.

However, this method of working does not reflect the cultural and economic aspirations of some excluded sections of society (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Thus people who already have access to money (economic capital) and networks of power and education (cultural capital) are more likely to be involved with groups of similarly privileged individuals (through using their social capital) and can then use these networks as systems for accessing greater privilege and employment opportunities and thus once more enhancing their access to economic capital (therefore becoming richer and more privileged). By definition, this cycle excludes anyone who does not know the 'rules' and cannot access the particular types of capital traded between 'successful people'.

In this report however, whilst agreeing largely with Bourdieu's thesis of capital and the ways in which these are used, we argue that the adaptive mechanisms used by 'successful' Gypsies and Travellers utilise a range of capitals in an effective manner which enables them to enhance their social and economic inclusion despite not necessarily wishing to engage fully with the 'mainstream' model of success. Thus, Acton's typography of 'passing' and 'cultural adaptation' can be perceived as a sophisticated variant on 'mainstream' use of capitals, which

allows Gypsy and Traveller community members to retain their own identity and values whilst succeeding on their own terms.

In contrast, those Gypsy and Traveller community members who have elected to reject contact with mainstream society as far as possible (Acton's concept of 'conservatism') are potentially at risk of becoming more marginalized in a rapidly changing world where access to qualifications, compliance with bureaucracy and regulations are markedly more important than even a decade ago. The low academic achievement (which is part of a complex matrix of exclusion (see Cemlyn et. al., 2009) but which does involve a degree of active choice to disengage from schooling for those families who have access to secure accommodation) and educational participation of Gypsies and Travellers are in part a cultural rejection (by some) of formal educational structures (Derrington and Kendall, 2004) which are perceived of as antipathetic or hostile to Gypsy and Traveller cultures. Thus, educational exclusion and rejection or lack of cultural capital are factors that contribute towards economic exclusion.

Bourdieu's discussion on symbolic capital (status and prestige) and the ways in which adherence to particular codes of behaviour offers a series of rewards and sanctions for certain activities (Jenkins, 2007) and also concepts that can offer some insights into the maintenance of particular forms of Gypsy and Traveller identity. Thus it can be argued that collective norms and values (for example privileging or placing a higher value on 'traditional' forms of economic activity than on educational attainment) may also prove important determiners of behaviour and outcomes for particular groups of Gypsies and Travellers.

Thus, we can see that whilst social capital (the entire bundle of networks of support, value systems and family/community groupings) can manifest as strong community ties ('bonding capital') which strengthen and protect a group; where this exists against a background of very 'conservative' behaviour a risk can exist that communities become static and inward looking and fail to adapt to changing circumstances as a result of adherence to, traditional modes of behaviour. In contrast, where both 'bonding' and 'bridging' capital (networks which involve connections to people or communities which are outside the group and which involve transfer of ideas or opportunities) exist greater

flexibility and innovation can occur (Halpern, 2007) which offers the potential for cultural adaptation without assimilation and loss of community identity.

These differing conceptions of social networks ('bonding' and 'bridging') when combined with Bourdieu's conceptual approach to possession, 'trading' and 'use' of various capitals (in particular social, cultural and symbolic) form the theoretical core of the TEIP research, enabling us to frame the life strategies used by successful Gypsies and Travellers and to explore the variable models used by individuals to achieve economic inclusion.

### ***Typologies of Traveller Life Strategies and Economic Organisation***

In the next section of this chapter we consider the types of economic organisation used by participants in the TEIP. Forms of Gypsy and Traveller economic activities which draw upon and are centred around the use of 'bonding social capital' (i.e. working with and for other Gypsies and Travellers) have been identified as following traditional 'Traveller Economy' practices. Cossee, (2005: 11) sets out the benefits and common elements of this way of working in a typology which the TEIP have adapted (below) to provide examples of this mode of economic activity.

#### ***The 'Traveller Economy'***

- \* Bonding capital (working with other family members/Gypsies or Travellers)
- \* Self-Employed
- \* Entrepreneurial and variable (flexible adaptation to what employment becomes available)
- \* Seasonal (typically farm labour or winter market selling)
- \* Nomadic
- \* Family based
- \* In family training (skills passed on amongst the family group)
- \* Non-separation of home and work base (work

and live with family group; some activities e.g. scrap metal collecting, based on home site)

#### **Advantages**

- \* Versatile (enables responsive methods of working – taking advantage of employment opportunities)
- \* Greater freedom (cooperative working methods enable choice over dates/times/ location of employment rather than being bound to waged labour practices)
- \* Networks within extended families create informal labour exchanges, and enable sharing of tool hire services, loan and credit services and information on potential contracts
- \* 'Bonds' family and kin-group more closely and enhances social capital of those engaged in this type of employment

#### **Disadvantages**

- \* In some cases flexible self-employment is unprofitable
- \* Low emphasis on formal training and lack of qualifications limit opportunities
- \* Heavily gendered – with decreasing employment opportunities for women

A number of other publications also discuss the actual organisation and types of employment practiced within the traditional Traveller economy and mirror the points outlined by Cossee. For more details, See further Acton, 1974; Power, 2004; Clark and Greenfields, 2006; ITMB 2007)

As Cossee notes the 'Traveller Economy' is not completely autonomous and discrete from the mainstream economy (Cossee, 2005:14). In practice, the Traveller economy and associated forms of work have always relied on interaction with and participation in wider society. Whilst Cossee makes specific reference to Gypsies and Travellers it is self-evident that the traits listed are not culturally specific but can also apply to other communities who favour these group-based methods of working.

The suggestion that the Traveller economic

mode pre-disposes to self-employment is borne out by other studies of ethnicity and employment in the UK (IZA, 2007) which have found a correlation between the nature of social networks available to an individual or group and types of preferred employment. For Gypsies and Travellers with high levels of bonding social capital, and significant social and cultural investment in retaining a traditional or 'conservative' way of life, waged labour has the potential to create unwelcome 'significant' relationships with those outside the group, which increases the power of external agencies and communities to influence Gypsy and Traveller practices. For individuals who wish to adhere to a traditional 'conservative' way of life this is likely to be unacceptable, as evidenced by the rejection of mainstream schooling amongst many 'traditional' families (Bhopal, 2004).

For individuals who opt to follow traditional self-employment practices within the Traveller economy the decline of fieldwork has led to the necessity of finding new 'markets' and economic activities.

Popular forms of self-employment for Gypsies and Travellers include 'trading' e.g. selling wares on open market stalls (such as carpets or three piece suites), dealing in scrap metal or importing cars from Europe. Other common activities include working in skilled manual trades such as gardening, tree surgery and horse breeding or animal training (Greenfields, 2006). The extended family networks which support strong bonding capital are also able to act as informal labour exchanges with participants reporting sharing tool hire services, extending loan and credit facilities to family members and sharing information on potential contracts or employment opportunities in a manner which is not dissimilar to that reported by migrant (predominantly Polish) workers in the South West of England (Nicholson and Stennett, 2010). The benefits of access to these 'informal' support factors add greatly to the profitability and versatility of the traditional 'Traveller Economy' even during times of recession.

### **Boundary maintenance within the Traveller Economy**

The nature of the Traveller Economy means that access to cultural capital (in this context, Traveller-work specific skills and training associated with particular types of trade)

are not gained through academic training but occur informally from within the family unit; predominantly through younger family members working alongside their elders and learning interactively. Amongst many Gypsies and Travellers (particularly those who adhere to Acton's (1974) 'conservative' practices) the traditional 'Traveller Economy' has long been the ideal form of economic activity. Thus high levels of symbolic capital (prestige) are attached to individuals who are able to make a living and support their family using traditional skills. For individuals who adhere closely to the traditional 'Traveller economy' model and who express a clear preference for following traditional ways of life, deviation from such forms of activity (particularly if this involves working with non Gypsies/Travellers or accepting waged labour) attracts condemnation, a degree of stigmatisation and loss of symbolic capital (Derrington and Kendal, 2004). Community values and adherence to a traditional way of life also leads to heavily gendered roles and expectations for families operating within the Traveller Economy. Thus, women are largely expected to focus on domestic or 'home based' roles or supporting activities which enable men to work more easily within the Traveller economy. (Levinson and Sparkes, 2003; EU, 2008, 58).

Whilst it may be argued that the cultural conservatism of the Traveller Economy and the maintenance of rigid inward-looking cultural borders may be counter-productive during times of rapid economic change and recession, Barth (1975) has argued that this mode of engagement is a defensive and effective response to the racism Gypsies and Travellers experience in wider society. Thus, Ballard and Ballard (1977) report that 'reactive ethnicity' is found amongst ethnic groups who develop, enhance and construct their ethnic identity as a way of organising against racism. Such inward-looking models and practices can effectively intensify perceptions of group boundaries and act to identify those who are 'in' the group and those who are 'outside', providing opportunities to affirm identities and strengthen group loyalties (Zubin et al., 1994).

Whilst it would appear that both success and failure within the Traveller Economy can lead to stasis, in fact evidence exists which indicates that those on the margins (either striving to survive, or who are highly successful) may experience cultural change. Thus for example, a prosperous Gypsy or Traveller business may

grow to the extent that it warrants moving from a highly mobile way of life (or residence on a rented plot on a site) to requiring access to a fixed abode and the ability to formally engage with regular employees. Similarly, for those families who are effectively destitute or tied to a site without access to traditional working opportunities, residence in such a location may lead to waged employment (Kenrick and Bakewell, 1995, 15).

To date, there has been little discussion in the existing literature (other than Cemlyn et. al., 2009) of new and innovative forms of economic activity which involved hybridised forms of traditional activities. Whilst the 'traditional' Traveller Economy involves economic action predominantly working within a closed, self-employed community setting, mainstream economic activities undertaken by Gypsies and Travellers involve the adoption of more majoritarian economic practices and behaviour whilst still retaining culturally specific traits. Whilst this is discussed in depth in Chapter Five, the summary below explores the main features of this form of economic organisation.

### **Traveller Mainstream Economic Activities**

- \* Bridging social capital (working with non-Gypsies and Travellers in a range of settings which enhances knowledge, skills and understanding of other communities)
- \* Greater levels of formal education and training are typically required than for employment in the traditional Traveller economy
- \* Typically individuals are engaged in waged employment or more 'formalised' business settings
- \* Heterogeneous employment and business networks are utilized (working with a range of communities and organizations which are not specific to Gypsies and Travellers)
- \* Biculturalism (participants often report being able to engage with both their Gypsy and Traveller families and communities and 'mainstream' society) with relative degrees of familiarity and comfort.
- \* Less gendered in terms of economic participation (research evidence suggests more women than men may participate in this type of

working model).

- \* More suited to a sedentary lifestyle (either residents of licensed sites or those in housing).

### **Advantages**

- \* Ability to access banking facilities and secure credit.
- \* Participants have greater acquisition of and access to formal qualifications and transferable skills.
- \* Development of greater knowledge and skills of diverse communities and development of community cohesion.

### **Disadvantages**

- \* Lower skilled individuals are likely to receive low pay and become caught in the 'low pay/benefits' trap.
- \* People with limited educational qualifications may find it difficult to develop their career paths or obtain stimulating work (see Derrington and Kendall, 2004).
- \* Discrimination and Racism (see further Cemlyn et. al., 2009; Greenfields, 2008 for a discussion on discrimination at work).
- \* The necessity for people who are 'passing' (see Acton's 1974 typology) to hide their identity from work colleagues to avoid discrimination, limiting their ability to feel 'safe' at work'.

Derrington and Kendall (2004) use the term 'biculturalism' to describe Gypsy and Traveller pupils who have successfully completed secondary schooling and are able to operate effectively in, and move between, two cultures, specifically that of their ethnic group and 'mainstream' society. We posit the argument that Gypsies and Travellers who are already 'bicultural' are most readily able to engage with 'mainstream economic activities', albeit that in some cases those individuals in waged employment are having to hide their ethnicity in order to secure and retain work and avoid peer harassment in the workplace (Cemlyn et al, 2009).



### **Gender and Age Dimensions of Mainstream Economic Activity**

As is discussed in more detail elsewhere in this report, differentiation in the ability and willingness to adopt life strategies varies by gender and age. Whilst Gypsy and Traveller women have suffered profoundly as a result of high levels of exclusion, in particular experiencing excessive levels of ill health and the emotional responsibility for supporting their families in the face of numerous pressures (CRE, 2006; Cemlyn et al., 2009), they have in some respects been more adept than males at coping with economic change.

In general, GTANA evidence has identified that women have been more likely than men to participate in and achieve more highly in educational and training programmes as well as mainstream economic activities (Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Dawson, 2000; Cemlyn et al., 2009).

So successful have many women been at making a transition to new economic activities that Levinson and Sparkes (2003) report a growing defensiveness around Gypsy and Traveller masculinity, which it is suggested may be attributable to the fragmentation of the Traveller Economy and a resulting sense of demoralization, a perceived loss of masculinity and internal conflicts within the community as men are less likely to be able to support their families through traditional (and highly valued) skills. Indeed there have been reports of growing tensions within families where changes have occurred to traditional Gypsy and Traveller gendered roles and women have become more involved in external employment activities (Richardson et al, 2007). Evidence from Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTANAs) suggests that not only women but also some younger Gypsy and Traveller men are proving more willing and able to adopt innovative economic strategies that depart from the 'traditional Traveller Economy' than are their elders. See further Appendix B.

### **Framing the Research Question**

Whilst the elements considered above are important in developing a framework for analysis, as we demonstrate within the main report the generalised typologies do not always hold true, as individual life strategies

often reveal great complexity, anomalies and sophisticated flexibility in responses to economic crisis. Despite the traditionalism of some Gypsies and Travellers, cultural boundaries and modes of working appear (within individual narratives) to frequently have been redefined through adaptation and cultural borrowing to meet changing circumstances (Acton, 1997). Thus the TEIP has sought to capture this dynamic process of change and adaptation to provide indications of the direction of life strategies which may prove most effective for supporting community members in a time of economic uncertainty.

### **Key Questions embedded within the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project are:**

- \* How have some Gypsies and Travellers achieved economic and professional success?
- \* What is the influence and importance of individual/group traits and personal characteristics (e.g. gender, age, educational participation) and different types of social networks and accommodation on the likelihood of becoming economically 'successful'?
- \* How do Gypsies and Travellers define 'success' – in 'mainstream' or 'culturally specific' terms?

### **Conclusion**

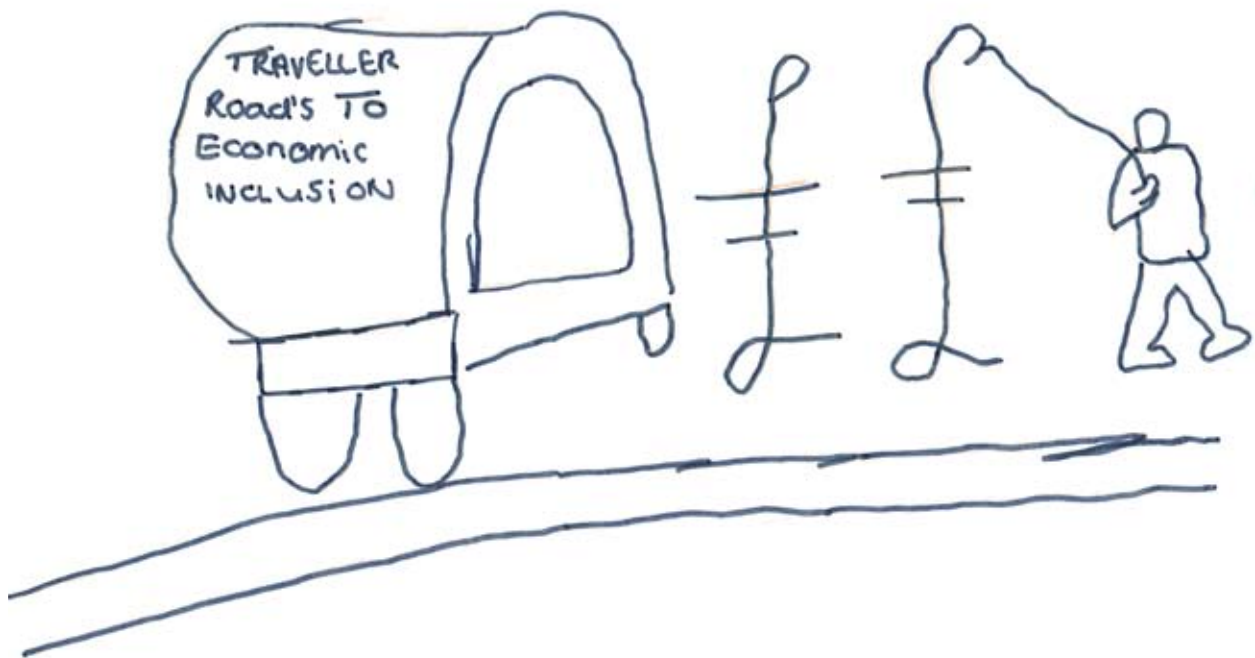
As has been outlined above, the policy and practical barriers facing Gypsies and Travellers before economic inclusion can be achieved are both complex and deep-rooted. In attempting to identify routes to fiscal equality (or at least equality of opportunity), a report for the World Bank has concluded that social inclusion policies for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers need to strike a balance between three distinct objectives (Ringold et al, 2005: 184)

- (i) Increasing Roma economic opportunities by enhancing and qualifying their participation in the labour market.
- (ii) Building human capital with the use of levers of health and education.
- (iii) Strengthening social capital and community development by facilitating Roma participation in the public sphere and civil society.

Whilst this formula does, in our opinion, provide the most effective recipe for enhancing

social inclusion, as we have indicated within this chapter, in Britain there has often been a mismatch in initiatives and outcomes resulting from a lack of joined-up policy and understanding of community dynamics and processes, despite the greatly welcomed and very positive focus on supporting Gypsies and Travellers in recent years. Accordingly, we present both the model with which this study was undertaken (see Chapters 2 and 3), and the findings (explored in subsequent chapters), as an example of integrated working which allows us to identify models of 'success' and simultaneously speculate on how local and national government, third sector agencies and community enterprises can work together to develop measures which will enhance the economic inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers.





## ***Chapter Two***

***Inclusive and Intercultural Action Research: The TEIP Approach***

## Chapter Two

### *Inclusive and Intercultural Action Research: The TEIP Approach*

#### *Introduction*

In Chapter One, in discussing the combined elements which have led many Gypsies and Travellers to experience economic exclusion we noted that there is evidence of increasing rates of unemployment amongst community members (Cemlyn et. al., 2009). In 2003 Niner noted that in over a third of local authority sites in England, managers reported that below ten percent of residents were employed. Given that the network of approximately 320 local authority sites accommodates one third of the caravan dwelling Gypsy and Traveller community, economic exclusion rates (at least amongst socially accommodated families) was already exceptionally high at the time that study was undertaken (Niner, 2003). The current economic climate is likely to lead to an exacerbation of this trend for welfare dependency, increasing the number of Gypsy and Travellers families on the financial margins of society. The limited evidence on housed Gypsies and Travellers (approximately two-thirds of the population) provides incomplete data on whether access to more stable accommodation and concomitant job opportunities, and potentially greater integration with mainstream services is allowing this sector of the community to gain greater economic security. However, in the light of findings relating to high rates of literacy difficulties; low access to training and qualifications; exacerbated anxiety and depression amongst 'forcibly settled' families; and residence (largely) in run-down housing estates suffering from 'poverty of place' (Cemlyn et. al., 2009; Greenfields and Smith, 2010; Shelter, 2007) it is likely that a significant percentage of housed Gypsies and Travellers are experiencing unemployment and resultant marginalisation.

As summarised in Chapter One, the predominant policy debates and focus of Gypsy and Traveller research since the 1960s has been on accommodation issues, (Richardson and Ryder, 2010) and improving educational achievement as a way of improving the situation of Gypsies and Travellers (DCSF, 2009). Despite these important developments, broader questions of the precise nature of

social inclusion and how the policy apparatus can facilitate a form of inclusion that meets the aspirations and lifestyle patterns of Gypsies and Travellers have not to date been included in policy discourse despite intensive campaigning around this issue by activists and policy agencies. It had been hoped that the Gypsy and Traveller Social Inclusion Taskforce, a body proposed by campaigners but never established (GTLRC, 2003) and Social Inclusion Unit report on frequent movers (SEU, 2006) would enable greater public debate on these issues but regrettably very little attention was devoted to the economic experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in the resulting publications, with intended 'follow-up' reports failing to materialise. Hence an important opportunity to extend understanding of the economic exclusion processes experienced by Gypsies and Travellers was missed, as was a chance to 'mainstream' their needs into policy and service provision whilst enhancing understanding and support for a now precarious way of life.

In 2007 the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain jointly organised a seminar with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on the topic of Gypsy and Traveller economic inclusion. At the seminar calls were made for the DWP to establish a regular forum on this issue (ITMB, 2007), however it was reported that a 'special interest group' focused on one minority would contravene the DWP policy of 'mainstreaming' of equality issues and no further work has been undertaken on this topic until the current Big Lottery funded report

#### *The Background to the TEIP*

The Traveller Economic Inclusion Project (TEIP) has been designed with the intent of exploring what factors may add resilience to communities and individuals seeking to enhance their economic status and how best to stimulate economic inclusion and growth within Gypsy and Traveller society.

A central feature of this debate is to explore the ways in which 'Traveller Economy' employment related activities can be evidenced and supported, as they are a clear determiner of material well-being and life chances for this community. Such a discussion has a clear intercultural dimension as socio-economic relations and interaction between the state, mainstream society and Gypsies and Travellers

need to be scrutinised within the nexus of employment-education-social inclusion. In turn such examination of opportunities and outcomes raises issues around cultural norms and values and the changing nature of group identity which are of critical interest for policy makers and actors working in the domains of community cohesion and inclusion.

The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain, working with key community and research partners (e.g Friends, Families and Travellers and Buckinghamshire New University) approached the Big Lottery Fund for financial support for an 'Action Research' programme using community development methods to explore the mechanisms used by (some) Gypsies and Travellers to secure economic inclusion. The Big Lottery Research Fund is designed specifically to encourage third sector (voluntary agency) groups to design and undertake research which is grounded in the experience of service delivery and the planning of support services for their client community groups. Thus, access to such sources of research funding sustains research that is perhaps more relevant and attuned to the needs of third sector groups and the communities with which they work than are some other forms of academic research that can be more detached from these constituencies. Outcomes from such third sector led research is particularly effective in delivering concrete policy outcomes.

It is intended that the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project report will provide the discussion, policy analysis and recommendations which to date Central Government agencies have failed to address, whilst providing space to debate broader cultural questions, including how best to preserve Gypsy and Traveller identities whilst mechanisms of economic inclusion are developing, and whether cultural change needs to take place to enable wealth to accrue to members of these minority groups.

### ***The Intercultural Context of Economic Policy Research***

#### **Key aims of the TEIP are to:**

\* Gain a greater understanding of culturally appropriate/adaptive mechanisms which are used by 'successful' Gypsies and Travellers and

which can be developed to increase economic inclusion across the community as a whole

\* To use the findings to influence local and national policy and practice in relation to planning for economic inclusion for marginalised communities.

\* Enhance and develop a partnership-formulated evidence/knowledge base which will be disseminated through various mechanisms to improve policy and practice pertaining to Traveller economic inclusion.

Before discussing the details of this project it is apposite to consider the intercultural underpinnings of the research model utilised in this study.

Powell and Sze (2004:1) refer to the philosophical and political science theory of interculturalism, as one which "recognises that in a society of mixed ethnicities, cultures act in multiple directions. Host or majority cultures are influenced by immigrant or minority cultures and vice versa. Multiculturalism tends to preserve a cultural heritage, while interculturalism acknowledges and enables cultures to have currency, to be exchanged, to circulate, to be modified and evolve".

Thus, interculturalism requires an inherent openness and willingness to be exposed to the culture of the "other". Once a person is exposed to an element of a different culture, and seeks to willingly (as opposed to under 'policy' duress) understand cultural variation, a dialogue of equals should ensue, where all participants embark upon understanding each other's culture (Bennett, 1998). The TEIP partners believe that the issue of economic and social inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers has been neglected by both community members and policy makers in terms of policy discussions. It is therefore hoped that the intercultural research approach used within this project will initiate dialogue, greater understanding and change both within the policy community and in wider practice. Debate of this type is also an embedded feature of action research – where 'insiders' and 'outsiders' join in a mutual learning process (Greenwood and Levin, 1998). In the TEIP we have elected to use an 'action research' methodology (see further Chapter 3) which is philosophically and politically wedded to an explicit 'change agenda' built upon intercultural understanding and appreciation.

### Participatory Action Research

Given that the TEIP has an explicit focus of seeking to enhance community involvement, engagement and skills development, the most appropriate form of methodology for use in this study was participatory action research.

Participatory Action Research is research that works explicitly with and for people rather than undertaking research on subjects, a mode of inquiry which has roots in the work of the educationalist Paolo Friere (1970) and also Antonio Gramsci who famously declared that all people are intellectuals and philosophers or "Organic intellectuals". In particular, Gramsci was preoccupied with foregrounding the conceptualisation that non-academic (predominantly) working-class people are more than able to take their local knowledge from life experiences, and use that knowledge to effectively address changes and problems in society (Gramsci, 1971, 258).

Participatory Action Research is an explicitly socio-political mode of research and the way in which it is undertaken is an active statement of political and policy ideals. In essence there are three core types of participatory research: Consultation; Participatory; and Partnership. We have noted above the tendency for successive political administrations to engage in consultation rather than partnership working, but it is the latter form of engagement which the research team engaged on the TEIP has embraced, a model which enables the voices of marginalised people to be heard and to have a full say in the development of both research methods and research outcomes.

There are sound reasons for adopting such a research approach, as Meyer notes 'its strength lies in its focus on generating solutions to practical problems and its ability to empower practitioners – getting them to engage with research and subsequent development' (Meyer, 2004: 454). This point is elaborated by Greenwood and Levin, key practitioners of action research whose seminal work 'Social Research for Social Change' (1998) has been influential in fashioning TEIP's research approach. According to these authors:

'Action research is social research carried out by a team encompassing a professional action researcher and members of an organisation or community seeking to improve their situation.

Action research promotes broad participation in the research process and supports action leading to a more just or satisfying situation for the stakeholders' (Greenwood and Levin, 1998: 4).

It can therefore be seen that action research has a democratic impulse as "Democracy in action research usually requires participants to be seen as equals. The researcher works as a facilitator of change, consulting with participants not only on the action process but also on how it will be evaluated" (Meyer, 2004: 454).

Throughout the TEIP, findings have been fed back to participants for validation and to inform decisions about the next stage of the research, in order that outcomes are meaningful and useful to the participants. As Meyer notes "The researcher strives to include the participants' perspective on the data by feeding back findings to participants and incorporating their responses as new data in the final report". (Meyer, 2004, 454)

The TEIP can be demonstrated to reflect the principles of participatory action research by:

- \* Having Gypsy and Traveller and community group representation on the project steering group and involved in research design and analysis.
- \* Having Traveller interviewers in a mixed team of interviewers conducting 100 qualitative (semi-structured/conversational) interviews with community members.
- \* The development of training courses in qualitative research for Traveller interviewers giving them greater understanding of how to conduct a semi-structured interview and analyse collected data.
- \* Giving Travellers who have been interviewed a chance to participate in analysis through regional seminars where findings are presented.
- \* A 'call to context': an insistence on framing the lived experience of marginalised peoples within a specific context as a defence against universalised discourse of equality; (Gillborn 2008; Delgado, 1995) is embedded in both the research proposal and all publishable and disseminated outcomes, ensuring that Traveller voices are heard in the final research report. In particular this is performed by using a high



number of direct quotations and case studies of Traveller life histories, making the final report accessible and comprehensible to the communities who are parties to the research.

### *Rationale for the selected methodology*

Many of the principal organisations and researchers involved in the TEIP have a long history of promoting participation and empowerment amongst Gypsies and Travellers in campaigning and policy development. Hence, participatory action research seemed a logical extension of this work. Principal TEIP organisations and researchers were involved in the work of the Traveller Law Research Unit where academics at Cardiff University Law School (Rachel Morris and Professor Luke Clements) facilitated the emergence of policy aspirations of a broad range of community representatives by drafting the Traveller Law Reform Bill and introducing these community members to the intricacies of legislative policy development. Once this process of policy formulation was completed an umbrella campaign organisation, the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition, was established which introduced and actively involved coalition community members in lobbying and engaging in direct dialogue with policy makers. The success of this work was noted by Liberty who awarded the coalition the Liberty human rights award in 2004. The citation for the award read:

*"For exceptional achievement in uniting Gypsies, Irish Travellers and New Travellers and providing a powerful voice to lobby for positive change and recognition of their human rights and for effective engagement of cross party support for some of the most socially excluded groups in the UK"*

The lead researcher for the TEIP was Andrew Ryder who was a founding member and the Policy Development Worker for the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition. Similarly the community groups the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain and Friends Families and Travellers were lead agencies in the coalition and are respectively the lead and one of the key partner organisations involved in the TEIP. Other modes of engagement have also brought about greater Gypsy and Traveller involvement in policy development and research processes and members of the research team have been involved in these.

Under section 225 of the Housing Act 2004

(CLG, 2007) local authorities are statutorily required to undertake Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTANAs) to identify the housing and site needs of community members. One of the first GTANAs completed in the UK was the Cambridgeshire GTANA on which Margaret Greenfields, (co-author of the TEIP project), acted as co-Principal Investigator and research methodology lead. One of the unusual features of this GTANA was that it involved Gypsies and Travellers in the design of the project and included community members as interviewers (Greenfields and Home, 2006). The Cambridgeshire GTANA has been described as 'best practice' by a range of organisations including Equality and Human Rights Commission; INVOLVE (the Department of Health funded advisory group on engaging health and social care service users' in practice development) and the European Fundamental Rights Agency.

Given that the TEIP wished to have a clear impact on policies affecting economic and social inclusion it was imperative that Gypsies and Travellers were meaningfully involved in all stages of the research so that the data captured was valid, providing meaningful insights into the lives of the researched community. This principle was captured in the development of the research methodology where community members were given an important role in research design and data collection and interpretation and conversational (non interrogative and hierarchical) interview methods were encouraged (see further Chapter Three).

Given that on principle the TEIP was determined to avoid 'quick and dirty' research where the researcher extracts information and uses it in a way which has no intrinsic value for the community being researched the team has been careful to involve community members throughout all stages of the project. Such 'quick and dirty' research methods are objectionable on ethical terms, particularly, as they consistently involve a failure to report back findings to the subject of the research. Where Gypsies and Travellers have been the topic of research and scholarship, it has sometimes been as passive 'research subjects' (an approach critiqued by Greenfields and Home, 2006). As a result, there has been at times little enthusiasm by community members to participate in something that appears to have little benefit for them (Brown and Scullion, 2009). Through

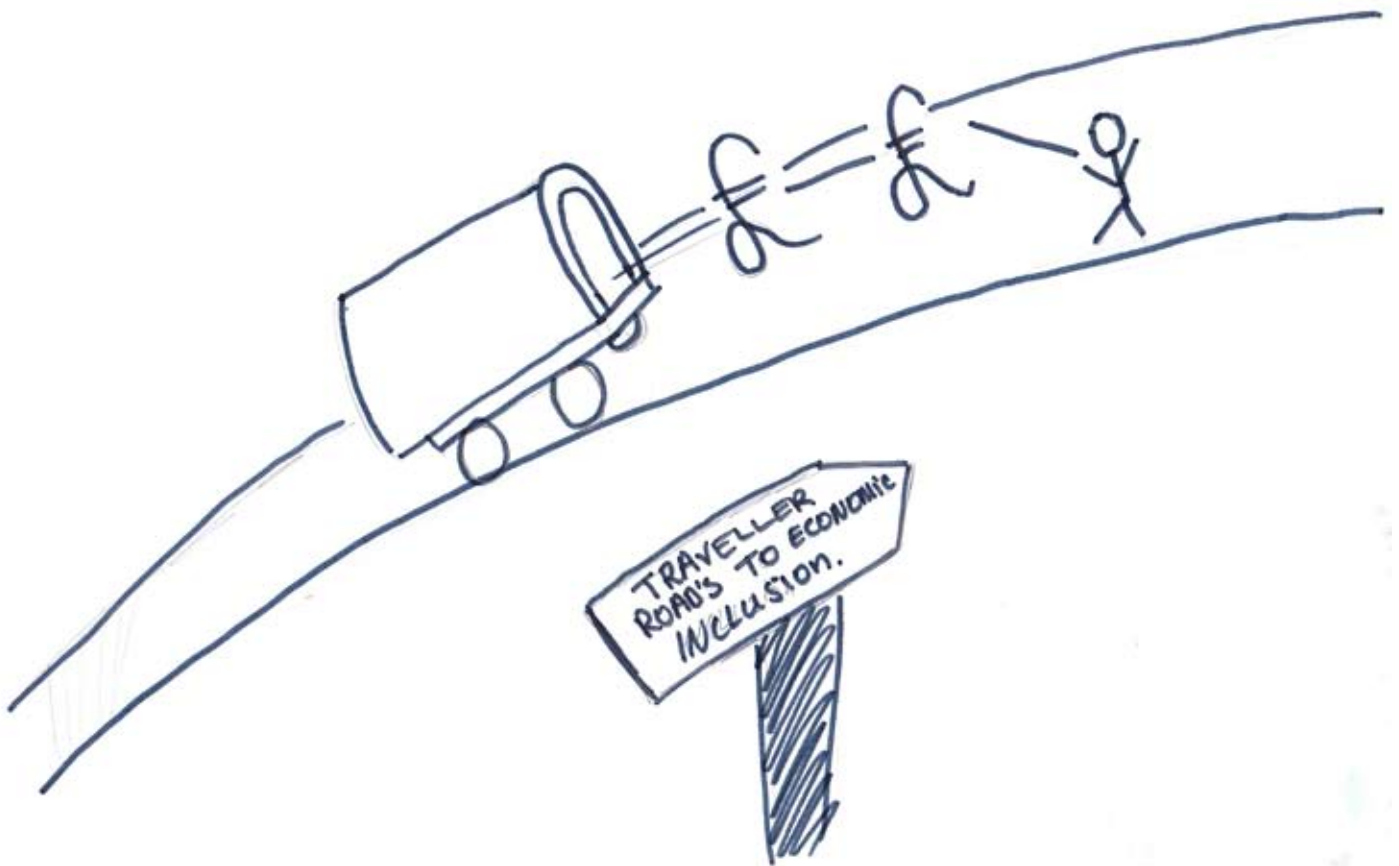
active partnership and participation of the community being researched the TEIP team has endeavored to maximise community 'buy in' as well as remaining true to the political and philosophical roots of participatory action research.

## Conclusion

In this chapter the researchers involved in the TEIP have set out the case for undertaking research with Gypsies and Travellers that is participatory, partnership-based, action orientated and which seeks to give something back to the community being researched.<sup>1</sup>

To do otherwise, and en passant to treat Gypsies and Travellers, who are one of the most excluded minorities in society, as nothing more than a passive research subject on which to model and demonstrate some distant abstract argument, is counter-productive and alien to our political philosophy. Not all research projects can emulate the scope of Gypsy and Traveller participation as set out by the TEIP and in this we acknowledge that we were fortunate in that the project was uniquely well funded and resourced. However, most forms of research provide scope and opportunity to give something back to the 'researched' in terms of participation and honest dialogue between the researched and the researcher and we would recommend most strongly that such methods are used when engaging with any marginalised or vulnerable community.

<sup>1</sup> For a more in-depth discussion on this topic see the (unpublished) conference paper with the same title submitted by Andrew Ryder and Margaret Greenfields to the Conference on Applied Interculturality Research, Graz University, Austria, April 2010



# ***Chapter Three***

***Research Methods***

## Chapter Three

### Research Methods

#### Introduction

In this chapter we detail the research methodologies used in the TEIP. As discussed in Chapter One, whilst this research has given consideration to the economic inclusion strategies of members of a range of communities (Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Roma and New Travellers) we have elected to focus predominantly on the experiences of Gypsies and Irish Travellers to reflect their numerical dominance in Britain and (compared to New Travellers) generally lower base level of academic attainment (with obvious implications for access to employment and economic inclusion).

Roma are included within the sample in respect of the experiences of high levels of racism and discrimination in their countries of origin, shared heritage with Romany Gypsies and increasing inclusion in UK wide strategies pertaining to health, education and related areas. We are acutely aware that the experience of migration and use of English as a second language interleaves additional layers of complexity to the situation and experiences of Roma and that exploring these migration narratives and policy approaches is beyond the scope of this study.

We therefore, in Chapter Seven, summarise recent reports pertaining to Roma exclusion and discuss literature in relation to New Traveller origins and experiences prior to presenting the data on economic exclusion and inclusion experienced by interviewees from these two communities discretely from that of Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies.

Accordingly, in the main, the findings reported within this study (and the majority of diagrams and charts other than in Chapter Seven) relate to Gypsies and Irish Travellers although where possible discussion is given of comparable findings between the larger groups and Roma/ New Travellers.

**Table 2 – Numbers of People Interviewed: The Research Sample (Numbers of People Interviewed by ethnic origin)**

<b>Roma</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>New Travellers</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Irish Travellers (including 4 of mixed heritage)</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Romany Gypsies (4 of mixed heritage/ 2 Scottish Travellers of Romany Gypsy Heritage)</b>	<b>60</b>

#### Research Methods (Qualitative Approaches)

As outlined in the previous chapter, we adopted an action research methodology with the intent of ensuring that respondents' aspirations and their range of life experiences were fully captured in this report. To enable us to fulfill this objective we have utilised qualitative methods (where interviewees 'describe' their experiences which are then contextualized and analysed to look for patterns and core themes) rather than quantitative methodologies (numerically based/ statistical) which are unsuitable for this type of research both because no real differentiated data exists on Gypsy and Traveller participation in the workforce, and as use of 'numbers' does not allow us to explore people's experiences, emotions and personal histories.

To obtain information we used semi-structured questionnaires (where a series of questions are asked and the interviewer then follows up the answer to particular questions to obtain 'rich', detailed information rather than following a rigid, set format where important data might be 'missed' when the interviewer goes onto the next subject). The key benefit of the use of un or semi-structured interviews is flexibility, allowing new questions to be improvised in response to interviewees' answers. The interviewer administering a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes/questions to be explored (a 'topic guide'). The 'topic guides' which were used by TEIP interviewers to steer the conversation whilst ensuring that key areas were covered can be found at Appendix C. Core questions used within the TEIP interviewees



were very 'open' to enable interviewees to focus on issues of concern and importance that they had themselves prioritised rather purely exploring those identified by the researcher team (See Appendix C for examples).

### ***Rationale for Use of 'Semi-Structured Questionnaires'***

Whilst our general approach requires the use of qualitative methods it would have been possible to use several different research techniques (see further May, 2001). However, we opted for the administration of semi-structured questionnaires on the grounds that these would be most inductive to 'conversational style' and would be regarded as culturally acceptable to participants and therefore yield the most productive results.

Research projects and consultations that involve highly structured and interrogative interviews have anecdotally aroused Gypsies and Travellers' suspicions of inquisitive 'outsiders', circumstances which are frequently conflated with past experiences of interrogative and prying officials who have meant ill will towards the community. The impacts of misuse of research has been acute for Gypsies and Travellers both in the UK and internationally (e.g. during the Second World War when specious racial stereotyping was used as a justification for genocide, see Kenrick, 2004). The legacy of such unethical practice has been profound, arousing concerns and retaining immediacy amongst community members to this day. During the final stages of the research project significant political changes were occurring in Britain with a change of administration with a somewhat different policy focus from their predecessors with regard to Gypsy and Traveller issues, and simultaneously anti-Roma discrimination and expulsions were taking place in mainland Europe. We were advised on several occasions that community members in the UK were anxious and concerned about political changes and indeed accessing interviews during the final months of the programme became significantly more difficult as a result of a general 'withdrawal' from engagement with agencies by some community members who were reluctant to draw attention to themselves or who had more pressing concerns relating to planning during a period of significant uncertainty whilst new policies were being drawn up and budgets recast. In the

light of our experiences and with the difficulties in accessing some potential participants, even with the aid of trusted community interviewees, the research team believes that use of other forms of research methods would have proved counter-productive.

Okely (who in the 1970s undertook leading qualitative research with members of these communities in Britain) observed that in her early experiences of contact with the Gypsy and Traveller population she found that highly structured interview questionnaires designed solely by outsiders could prove counterproductive to a research project in which the community had little 'buy in', forcing her to rethink her approach (Okely, 1983). Researchers involved in other studies as well as GTANAs confirm that similar difficulties in obtaining data have occurred within a number of projects where partnership working has not taken place to devise suitable questionnaires or inappropriate methods have been used.

Not only do we believe in principle that Gypsies and Travellers should be actively involved in the design of all questionnaires and topic guides, but in terms of practical results, utilising techniques which draw out a conversational style of interview have proven more culturally conducive to Gypsy and Traveller engagement whilst empowering interviewees by enabling them to set out their concerns, interests and aspirations without undue restriction. Thus, the use of qualitative methodologies increases the ability of the research to validly capture the experiences of those being interviewed. Moreover, where the authors adopt a 'call to context' (Delgado, 1995; see further Chapter Two) as has occurred within TEIP, combined with significant use of direct quotations, findings are able to be presented more effectively to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller voices speak directly to the reader.

### ***Data Recording***

Interviewers digitally recorded the interviews after obtaining 'informed consent' from participants. This method of recording the data (as opposed to writing down key comments) provides a more accurate record of the discussion than would be possible if an interviewer attempted to note down everything said in an hour long meeting. Thus, methods associated with the use of semi-structured

questionnaires are different from 'survey' methods (similar to those used in GTANAs) where answers to some (fairly 'fixed'/closed) questions are written onto forms and other questions are predominantly quantitative in format (for example asking about numbers of family members, vehicles etc.)

Use of a digital recorder to capture data also enabled the interview to feel more like a conversation, allowing the interviewer to concentrate on the discussion rather than taking notes. This approach places interviewees at ease and enables them to feel comfortable in divulging more revealing information of the type essential to producing a qualitative study where insights are being sought into life histories and economic strategies. This is in contrast to a formal 'interrogative' style of interviewing which could potentially stifle opportunities for respondents to speak on their own terms and without pressure. None of the interviewees declined the request to have their interview recorded. However, we are aware that some participants who were unaccustomed to being interviewed may have felt a little apprehensive at the start of the process. Interviewers report that any initial nervousness was offset by the interviews being conducted in respondents' homes where they felt comfortable, and also by the conversational nature of the interview.

### **Ethical Issues**

All interviewers received training in ethical guidance prior to commencing the interview stage of the project. Thus, information was given on the nature of 'informed consent' and the ability for an interviewee to request the termination of an interview at any time; issues relating to legal and ethical duties in relation to child and vulnerable adult protection; health and safety whilst interviewing and dealing with sensitive topics during an interview. All participants were required to provide written 'informed consent' to indicate that they understood the nature of the project and purposes of the interview. In accordance with the Big Lottery Fund requirements and a sound research practice ethical review for the project, on-going available guidance was provided by the Buckinghamshire New University Society and Health Research Ethics Committee and the day-to-day progress of the project was guided by the ethics guidance issued to members of

the Social Policy Association and the available from the Economic and Social Research Council.

### **Purposive Sampling**

Interviewees were selected to participate in the study on the basis of personal characteristics and geographical location. This method of selecting participants is known as purposive sampling (as opposed to 'random' sampling where for example every third person on a list is selected for interview).

When opting to use 'purposive sample' a person (or object) is included in the pool of interviews because the 'case' (or locality) or person illustrates some feature of a process that the researcher is interested in exploring (Silverman, 2000:104). In the TEIP project, the main 'variable' (thing we were interested in) was the means by which interviewees earned a living. Purposive sampling can illustrate a range of circumstances and ensure 'interesting' cases are included and this has been the approach taken within the TEIP. In the selection of the 'sampling frame' (pool from which interviewees were drawn), the TEIP endeavored to include a cross section of ages, geographic location and gender balance (see Tables 2 to 6 below) but also interviewees who represented a full economic range of Gypsies and Travellers (for example people working in professional; skilled and unskilled occupations; including those who are self-employed as well as waged).

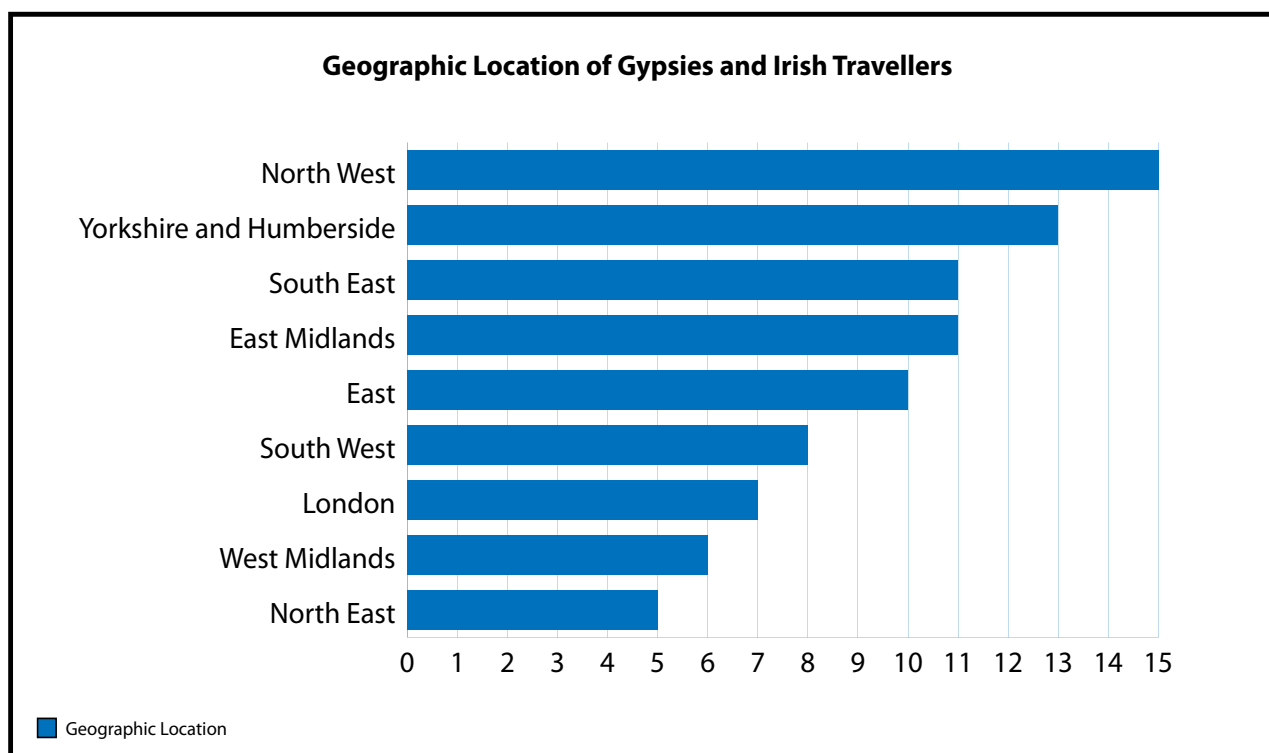
### **Geographical Location**

Longitudinal analysis of administrative statistics collected during the biannual caravan count, a count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans which takes place twice a year and records the number of caravans on both authorised and unauthorised sites across England (CLG, 2010), indicates that the greatest concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers are resident in the East and South East of England. To avoid a mismatch in data collection and loss of relevant regional data enabling geographical comparison of opportunities throughout England, the TEIP team resolved that a more even distribution of interviews across the regions should be undertaken, rather than compliance with statistical findings.

Accordingly, a quota target of 10 interviews was set for each region. In practice, in some localities targets were not met as a result of lack of contacts or specific local circumstances, whilst in other areas, existing contact networks allowed this target to be exceeded. The sample frame was also (wherever possible) stratified by age, gender, employment type and ethnicity, with the intent of obtaining interviews which provide insight into a broad range of Gypsies and Travellers' experiences in the UK.

Redistribution of 'unmet' targets took place during the final stages of the project in an attempt to provide the overall sample of 100 as initially planned. In practice, 95 interviews were obtained (see Table 1 for further information).

**Table 3 below indicates the geographic location and numbers of Gypsy and Irish Traveller interviewees. (Further information on Roma and New Traveller respondents are considered in Chapter 7)**

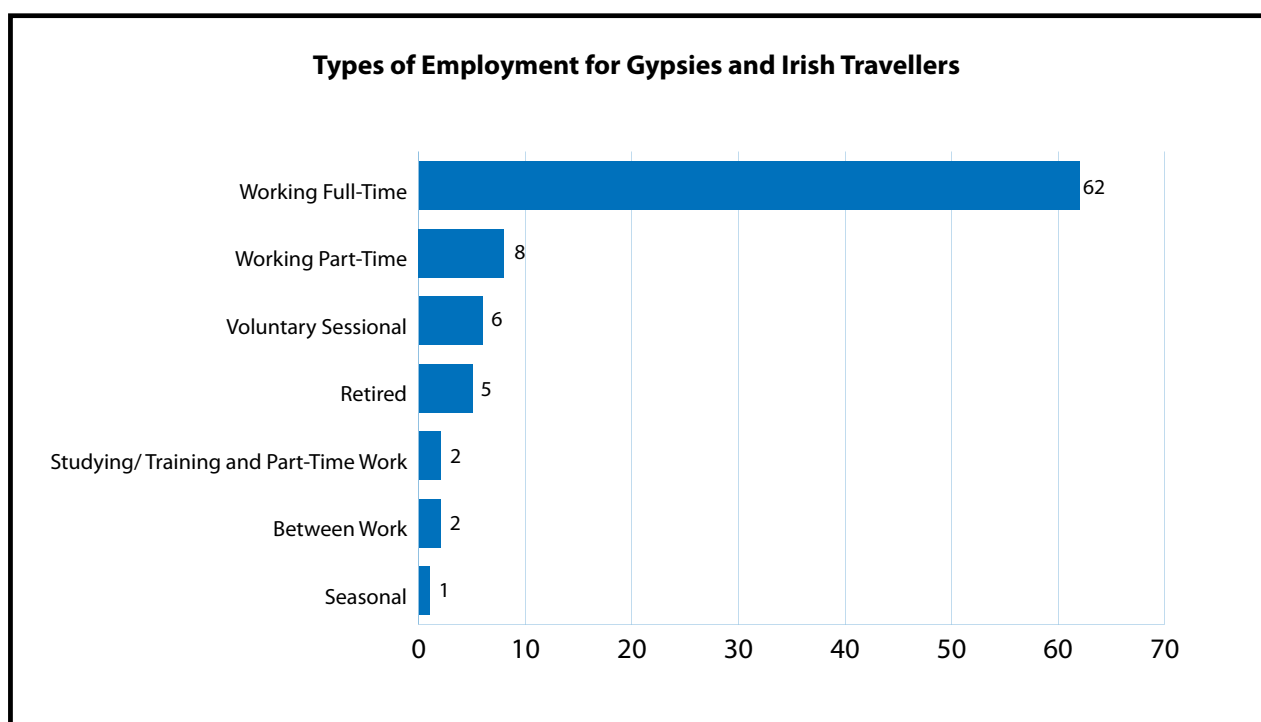


### Types of Employment and Economic Inclusion

Interviewees were selected because they were representative of a range of definitions of Traveller success. Here there was some variation in terms of interpretation based on notions of success via the traditional 'Traveller Economy' and 'bridging' economic activities (See Chapter Two). For some Travellers self-employment and nomadism are considered the ultimate in economic inclusion and are felt to be superior to waged employment. The self-employed category formed a large proportion of the interviewees. Interviewees had a wide range of incomes that spanned from what were in some cases very wealthy individuals to those living on much lower incomes and probably experiencing relative poverty. Nearly 10 percent of the

'waged' group also fell into the low income banding level. However, waged professionals were a rapidly growing category. Most had derived employment in this area in recent years and were employed in community and education projects and were largely women. The management and higher professional category represented a fifth of the sample. The diagram below reflects the employment status categories of the Gypsy and Irish Traveller sample expressed numerically.

**Table 4: Types of Employment Undertaken by Interviewees**



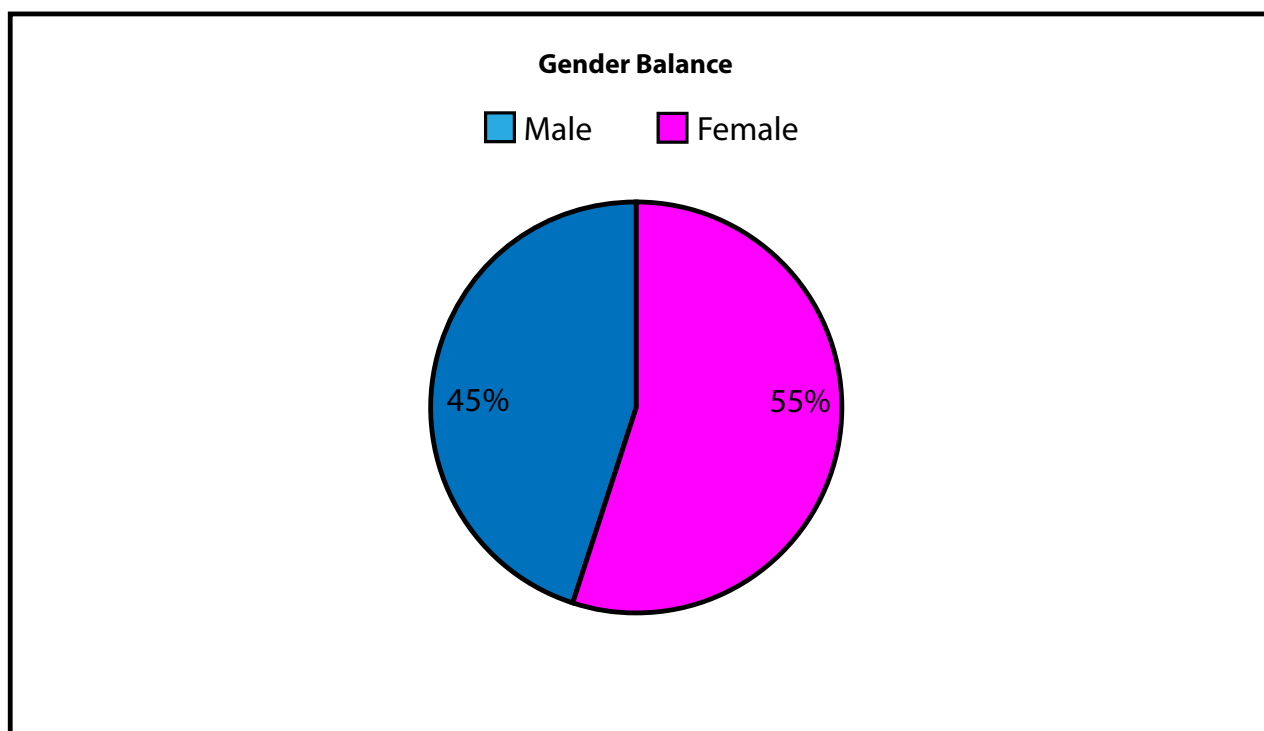
### Gender

In the light of findings that the male and female workforce in the UK is now virtually equal in terms of numbers (ONS 2009), the sampling frame would (if matched to 'main-stream' economic patterns) require equal numbers of male and female interviewees.

Whilst rates of engagement with paid employment varies by gender in many minority ethnic groups, and amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities women are often encouraged to stay at home and perform domestic duties or support the male breadwinner in their economic activities (Cemlyn et al, 2009) the TEIP sought to obtain equal numbers of male and female interviewees. In practice, it proved

easier to identify economically active women to interview as they were more likely to be employed in Traveller support services and/or known to the researchers and interviewers. Previous investigations have found Gypsy and Traveller women are generally more willing to be interviewed than their male partners, (Norfolk GTANA6 20608) and within the TEIP women were indeed generally more open to participation, no doubt reflecting greater experience with dealing with external agencies. Accordingly more women were interviewed than men (55% female/40% male).

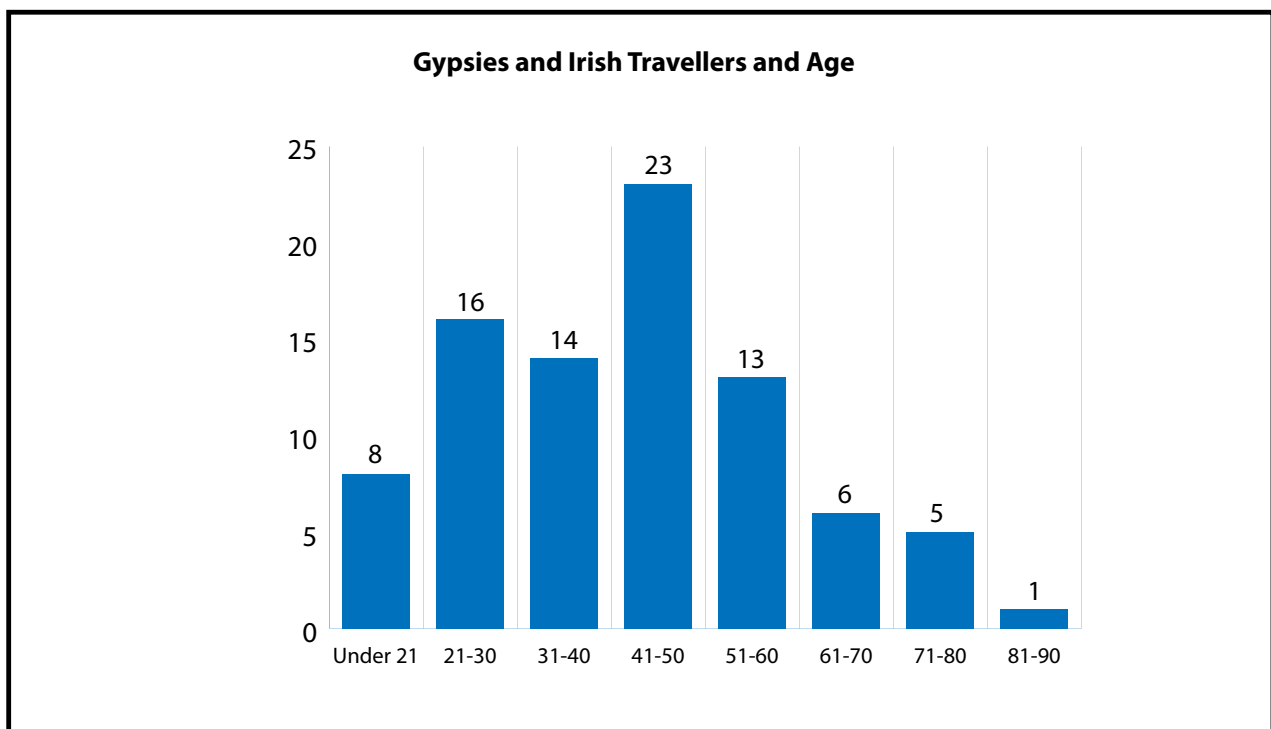
**Table 5: Gender Balance of Interviewees**



### Age

In keeping with the intention of accessing a broad range of respondents we were successful in interviewing community members across a wide range of ages (between 18 and 87 years). Use of such broad age bands allowed the research to identify generational trends in employment, attitudes to changing work opportunities and experience.

**Table 6: Age/Number of Interviewees**

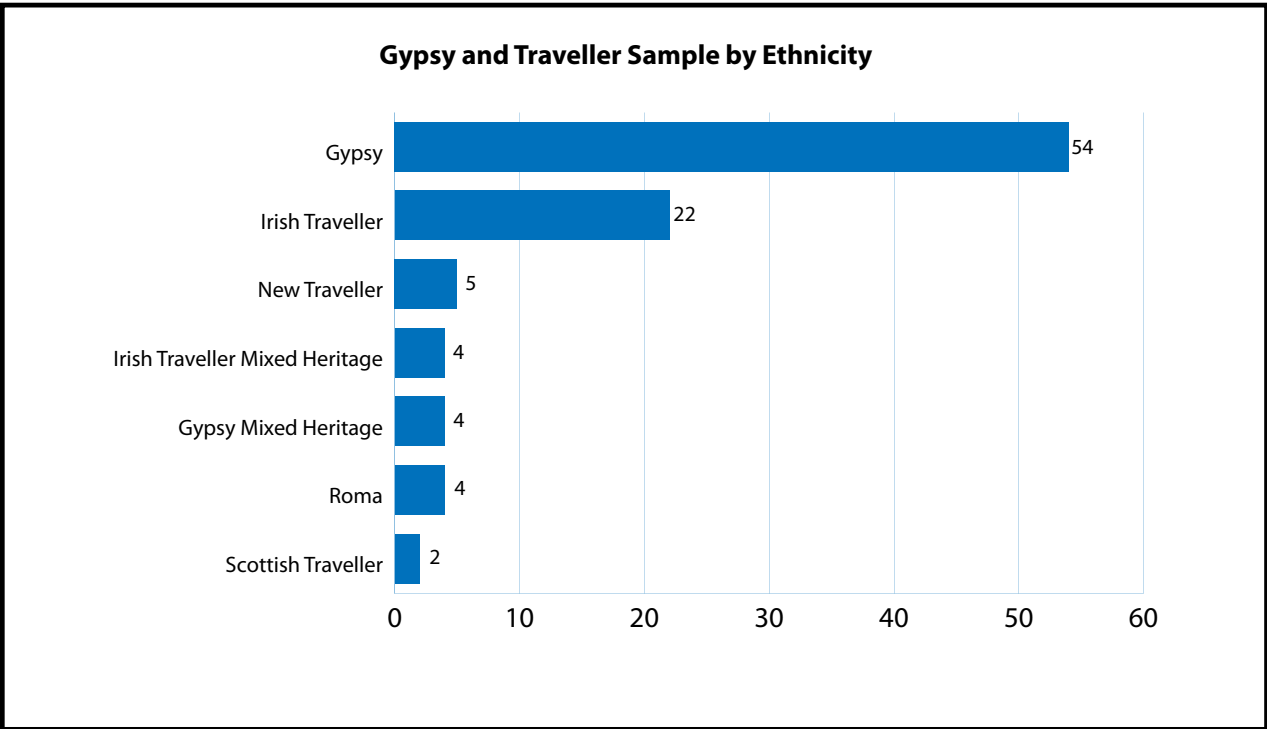


**Sample Frame by Ethnicity (Proportionality Issues)**

In devising a sample frame by ethnicity the TEIP team were constrained by the paucity of accurate figures on the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in England. At the time of writing the most efficient data set is PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census). Although there is a reluctance by some families to self-identify as community members (often based on a well-justified fear of racist bullying) the PLASC data still provides an important profile of this community (see further Cemlyn et. al. 2009). The PLASC data for primary school attendance for 2007/8 revealed that there were 5,760 Gypsy/Roma pupils enrolled in school in England/Wales compared to 2,900 Irish Travellers (DCSF, 2008) with a significant decline in both groups at secondary school age associated with early school leaving (see Chapter One). Using these data sets allows the researcher to make a crude

analysis of national percentages/proportions of the two main community groups. Such an estimate enables the TEIP to work on a basis of one third of the Gypsy and Traveller community is comprised of Irish Travellers whilst the remaining two thirds are Gypsies. Accordingly, it was agreed that at least a third of the interview sample should be Irish Travellers. The diagram below shows the full TEIP sample by self-identified ethnicity, and represents all ethnic groups interviewed (e.g. Gypsy/Irish Traveller/Scottish Traveller/mixed heritage/Roma/New Traveller)

**Table 7: Gypsy and Traveller sample by Ethnicity**





### **Recruitment for Interview Staff and Data Collection**

The interviewer posts were advertised in the Guardian, ITMB website and a targeted mail shot. Interestingly, no members of the Gypsy community applied for these roles, but the TEIP employed two Irish Traveller interviewers. In addition, two non-Travellers were employed, who already had extensive experience of working with and interviewing Gypsies and Travellers (through policy and GTANA projects).

The decision to seek community interviewers was grounded firstly in the philosophical underpinning to the TEIP and secondly on sound practice in relation to obtaining good quality results. In common with a number of practitioners who have worked with diverse communities (Gunaratnam, 2003) it is our experience that community interviewers can, in some circumstances, be more effective in gaining access to interviewees than 'outsider' researchers. Accordingly, their involvement provides added value to a project, and can also provide important cultural advice and guidance to the academic team as a project progresses. In addition, the employment of community interviewers is a clear declaration that a research project is striving to be inclusive and respectful of participants' worldview whilst enhancing community cohesion and trust between parties to the research.

Previous research projects have used mixed teams of data gatherers. An example of this is the Fordham survey for the London Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (Fordham, 2008). Such a mixed team (Gypsies/Travellers and members of other communities) allowed the development of a research team in which members learnt from each other and supported all aspects of the project, including data analysis. Mixed team dynamics were facilitated within the TEIP by a team training event that gave the data gatherers an overview of the project; how they could work effectively as a team and contribute fully to the project.

### **Accessing the Sample and making contact with community members**

A number of access processes were used to obtain interviews. In particular, interviewees were contacted through:

- \* Gatekeepers (interview facilitators – often working with community groups or educational services)
- \* 'Snowballing' (where one person who has been interviewed introduces another interviewee to the process)
- \* Contact networks of interviewers (individuals already known to the interview team)
- \* The TEIP team attending Stow Fair (where information about the project was provided to attendees of this traditional Horse Fair which takes place twice a year)
- \* Placing advertisements in Traveller Times (the specialist journal by and for Travellers published several times a year)
- \* Attending ITMB conference
- \* Attending Advisory Council for the Education of Romanies and other Travellers (ACERT) and National Association of Teachers of Travellers (NATT) conferences

In line with our ethical guidance, only adults were interviewed and anonymity was guaranteed for all interviewees enabling them to speak freely about experiences (for example of discrimination which they might not have wished to discuss if they knew their name would be in the public domain). Informed (written consent) was sought from interviewees prior to interview and information provided on the nature of the project as well as the ethical guidelines under which it was undertaken. The great majority of interviews were undertaken on a one-to-one basis and were conducted in the interviewees' homes, as it was felt that this would enhance the conversational nature of the interview by helping to put the interviewee at ease. A small number of interviews were conducted in other locations such as cafes or during breaks in conferences. On a few occasions family members/gatekeepers were present during the interview at the request of the respondent.

### **Subject Inclusion Criteria**

The following inclusion/exclusion criteria were imposed to ensure appropriate ethical boundaries and to enable comparative analysis to be undertaken. All participants were required to:

- \* Be an Adult (over 18 years of age)
- \* Be in waged employment or self-employed in a trade or
- \* Be in training or education – with the intention that such training/education would lead to work
- \* Be identified as a member of the Gypsy/ Traveller community

Conversely, a subject exclusion criteria was also drawn up, ensuring that anyone interviewed:

- \* Must not be a child
- \* Pose any danger/threat to the interviewer
- \* Vulnerability through age/disability/lack of capacity in terms of reasoning and/or ability to make an informed decision.

### Analysis

All 95 tape recorded interviews were transcribed in full (every word which was said, was typed up to allow the research team to review the findings more easily than if they had to listen to a tape on each occasion). As each tape averaged over an hour in length, the transcription process was extremely lengthy and collating the diverse themes, and analyzing a dataset of this size was a complex task. Analysis was facilitated by use of a specialist social science computer software programme called NVIVO. Once key phrases and themes are entered into the programme NVIVO can cluster data thematically and cross reference information such as occupation type, gender, age, length of education, etc. This enables the generation of multi-variety coding and can reveal complex relationships between traits and personal characteristics which can reveal the factors more likely to lead to 'success' within particular types of economic activity.

A key aspect of secondary analysis involved the process of inviting interviewees to regional feedback sessions where they were given the opportunity to participate in the analysis through the process of commenting on and explaining core trends identified through NVIVO analysis. These comparative analytical processes led to continual refinement and articulation of findings (essentially using a modified "grounded theory" process, see further May, 2001) wherein agreement was reached

over key themes through partnership working involving community members; members of the steering group and research staff, supported by academic experts.

### Methodological Considerations: Coding Complexities

A key issue for analytical purposes is the way in which 'coding' of data takes place. In particular, which measures were to be used to enable the team to measure economic 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'. This is particularly relevant given that amongst some Gypsies and Travellers with whom we consulted (particularly those who are 'traditional'), measures of inclusion which related to cultural capital (see Chapter One) – for example high quality china/glass; self-ownership of a site with planning permission and ownership of traditional wagons/horses etc. were indicative of higher levels of social inclusion than ownership of a house (with mortgage); despite the fact that such evidence of material inclusion may in practice be worth less than some other 'mainstream' markers of 'success'.

At one stage in the research the TEIP team considered a mechanism to grade the material levels of success (ownership of property; levels of income, etc.) of the interviewees to assist in data analysis. Differentiation between 'modest' and 'wealthy' could potentially have been achieved by asking interviewees to match their income to broad income bands as is common in 'mainstream' surveys and research into income generation/economic inclusion. A study of Hungarian Roma economic enterprises has successfully used this approach (Babusik, 2004). However, cultural issues and sensitivities in working with British Gypsies and Travellers precluded such a direct approach. It was felt strongly by the advisory panel and 'experts' that interviewees would respond to such overt questions with some suspicion which would lead to a risk of failed interviews. This conclusion was supported by findings from a number of GTANAs where interviewees in a number of cases were reluctant to answer such questions or research teams decided (in the light of expert advice) not to approach such topics directly.

Another formula to assess wealth that was considered involved interviewers grouping interviewees into general income bands based on perceptions based on accommodation types and ownership of certain possessions such as vehicles and machinery. However, the TEIP team rejected this approach on philosophical and political grounds as it was considered that it was ethically objectionable for an interviewer to undertake a fundamentally important assessment based on subjective perception and without the explicit consent and involvement of the participant. In addition, a methodological object can be raised that anomalies and inaccuracies would ensue as a result of using a crude 'banding' system similar to the one outlined above. As a consequence of these discussions, the TEIP has adopted the 'Equalities Measurement Framework' (EMF) which has been developed for the Equality and Human Rights

Commission and the Government Equalities Office by a team based at the London School of Economics (EHRC, 2009).

This broader measure not only permits consideration of economic inclusion but also considers wider issues such as access to opportunity, equality domains, availability of accommodation, educational attainment and social relationships. The breadth of this approach mirrors Bourdieu's conceptualisations of a full intersectional range of cultural, economic, symbolic and social capitals in determining life chances (see further Chapter One).

## ***The Equalities Measurement***

### ***Framework (EMF)***

The EMF uses a list of 48 'indicators' to cover a range of issues and consider whether individuals and groups have equality of access and outcomes within these domains. The measures include a range of fundamental issues including health status; ability to engage in lifelong learning; achieving an adequate standard of living; physical and legal security, and the right to self-expression. The EMF aims to monitor how people (as a group) are achieving; how they are treated by other members of society; and the level of choice and control they have in various aspects of their lives. The ten areas of life covered by the Equality Measurement Framework are:

1. life
2. health
3. physical security
4. legal security
5. education and learning
6. standard of living
7. productive and valued activities
8. individual, family and social life
9. identity, expression and self-respect
10. participation, influence and voice.

Data collected in the TEIP research was matched where possible against the above indices. The TEIP report then uses the general indicators of the EMF (for example access to education and learning or physical security, freedom from fear of eviction/violence) to evaluate, measure and identify concerns which exist for members of the Gypsy and Traveller community when considering findings from survey materials. Thus, for example where it can be shown that Gypsies and Travellers who are educationally disadvantaged have a lower rate of 'economic success/inclusion' and that only by 'special measures' or positive action can they (as a general group) achieve on a similar level to other members of broader society, we identify this as a key action/discussion point which,

if remedied, demonstrates compliance with suggested EMF frameworks and outcomes as well as offering a way to engage with the inequalities outlined in the first EHRC triennial review, "How Fair is Britain" (2010), which highlighted the extreme degree of exclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers.

### ***Methodological Reflections and Learning Points***

Having undertaken this study, the research team have reflected on lessons learnt within this project. One core element for amendment in similar research consists of the practical challenges inherent in seeking to use such broad-brush and ambitious measures of inequality. On mature reflection the team believes that the questionnaire may have been unduly ambitious in attempting to capture a range of insights into a wide range of variables over and above economic activities (e.g. earlier experiences of education, accommodation issues and social networks etc.) The conversational style of interview in some cases meant the later parts of the interview could not be fully completed because interviewees had spoken at considerable length in the main body of the interview which focused on employment. By the time other topics had been reached some interviewees (particularly males) would wish to return to their personal activities, or needed to get back to work or dealing with other business activities. For women, the need to attend to children or domestic chores could be problematic if an interview was particularly lengthy. Participants of both genders sometimes found the length of the interview tiring after a day at work. Whilst the spread of interviews and work undertaken was fairly representative, the TEIP would have liked to have made more contact with interviewees engaged in the 'Traveller Economy'; in particular men working in this sector. On reflection this could have been achieved by spending more time working with residents of particular sites or effecting a presence at more 'horse fairs' and thus developing informal contacts which could lead to interviews with harder to reach males engaged in 'traditional' work.

At times (and in some locations) the TEIP team found it difficult to secure access when the interviewers were not known to the interviewees. This difficulty is largely reflective of the closed networks in some areas, and

concerns relating to political and economic pressures in recent months. In future research projects, to minimise these problems, the TEIP would recommend considering contracting community groups to undertake interviews and data collection in their locality after receipt of training in conducting semi-structured and qualitative interviews. Not only would access issues be minimised but this would build further capacity amongst community groups.

As interviewers were trained in flexible interviewing techniques and encouraged to follow the flow of the interviews in a naturalistic manner, on occasion, some questions were not raised where considerable time was spent on particular topics, leading to difficulties around comparison of themes or consistency of answer. The variations in working with 'open questions' meant that it was not always possible to classify responses into distinct groupings where sub-classifications overlapped.

As some respondents failed to answer certain questions (either through declining or as a result of the methodological difficulties outlined above), or gave answers which were not relevant/applicable to the question under consideration, in certain cases responses were excluded from analysis.

Accordingly, when representing responses to questions (illustrated through diagrams and charts) percentages are based on the number of interviewees who responded to a particular question rather than the total sample (although numbers/percentages of responses are clearly indicated within the text of each chapter).

The 'core demographic/profiling questions' in the survey e.g. age, gender, type of accommodation (see Appendix C.) were uniform enough to allow key sections of the data to be sorted and analysed using quantitative methods

Whilst the TEIP academic team/advisors were impressed with the overall quality of interviews obtained by interviewers, semi-structured interviewing is a complex process and the ability to improvise effective follow on questions and 'probes' to expand on answers can be challenging. Such knowledge is a skill which develops over time and with experience. With hindsight two days should have been set aside for training in unstructured interviewing to assist the relatively inexperienced team. In practice, the lead researcher used ongoing

monitoring of data /interview transcripts and deconstruction/ discussion over experiences of interviewing to provide further training and support for data gatherers, enabling them to develop their skills during the course of the project.

The TEIP team hopes that other researchers will benefit from the lessons learnt and successes achieved whilst using the research approach adopted during this research, in particular, those relating to the development of practitioner and community member skills through working on an action research project of this type.

The clear and positive conclusion that can be drawn from the TEIP is that community involvement in research is an important component of inclusive research; ensuring that research is carried out 'with' and 'for' this group rather than 'on' Gypsies and Travellers. Whilst many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller organisations and community groups are currently at the beginning of a steep learning curve in terms of research experience; additional research experience and training will strengthen the role and input of Gypsies Roma and Travellers into research processes and ensure that research is always used as a beneficial tool for change rather than an instrument of oppression.

## Part Two – Findings Related to Work

In this Section of the Report we present the findings which relate specifically to types of employment and experiences of the workplace.

We have divided this section into the following Chapters. Chapter Four explores the 'traditional' Traveller Economy which is essentially a zone of self-employment; whilst in Chapter Five we explore findings relating to Gypsies and Travellers experiences of waged employment, working in the informal economy and access to welfare. In Chapter Six we turn our attention to the new and growing field of community based employment where Gypsies and Travellers work with and on behalf of their own communities. In the last chapter within this section (Seven) the findings relating to the experiences of New Traveller and Roma interviewees are presented, enabling a consideration of different types of employment, experiences of access to work and comparisons of the circumstances of these communities to that of Irish Travellers and Gypsies.

Within the following chapters where specific concerns are identified these are cross-referenced to relevant domains within the EHRC Equality Measurement Framework (EMF). In particular these consist of the following factors:

### Concerns

- \* The decline of the Traveller Economy and irregular income derived from this mode of work
- \* Increasing rates of employment in low waged work
- \* High levels of localised unemployment
- \* Long and unsociable hours in both the Traveller Economy and for those engaged in 'Community Work'
- \* Minimal health and safety provision and low levels of business support for individuals working in the Traveller Economy
- \* Underage employment within the Traveller Economy.

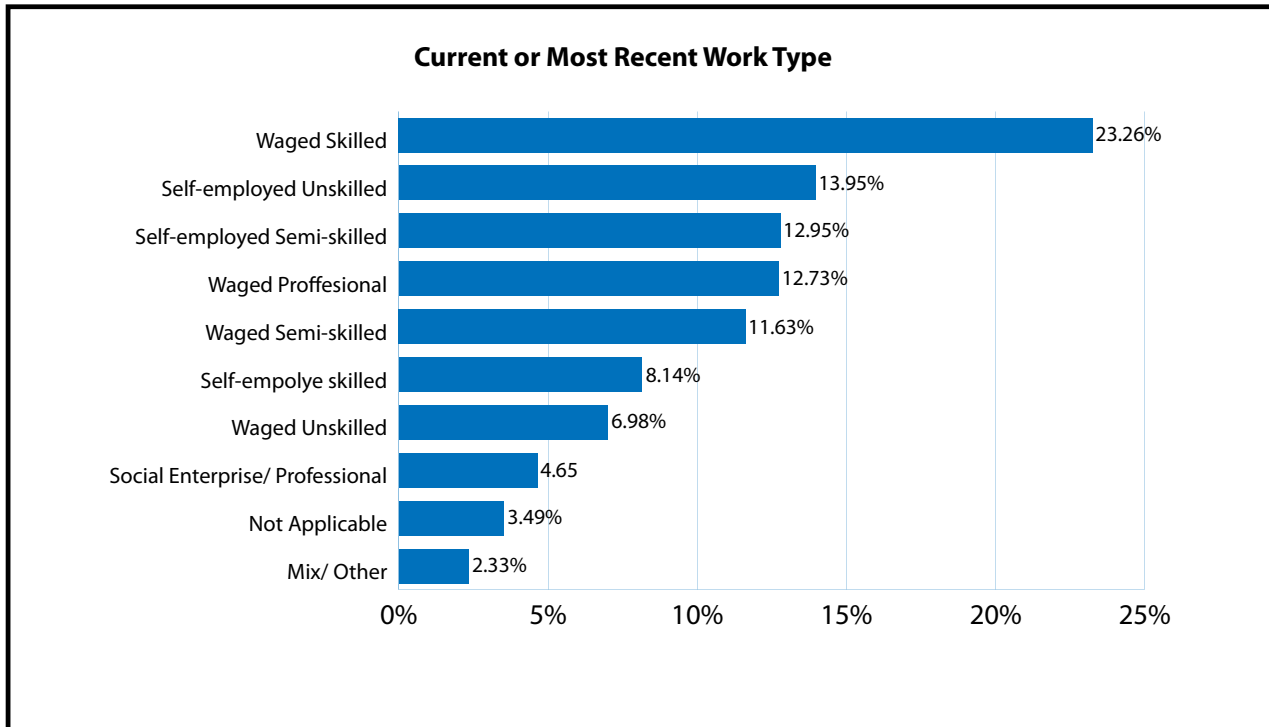
### Related EMF domain

The capability to enjoy a comfortable standard of living, with independence and security which is measured by the ability to:

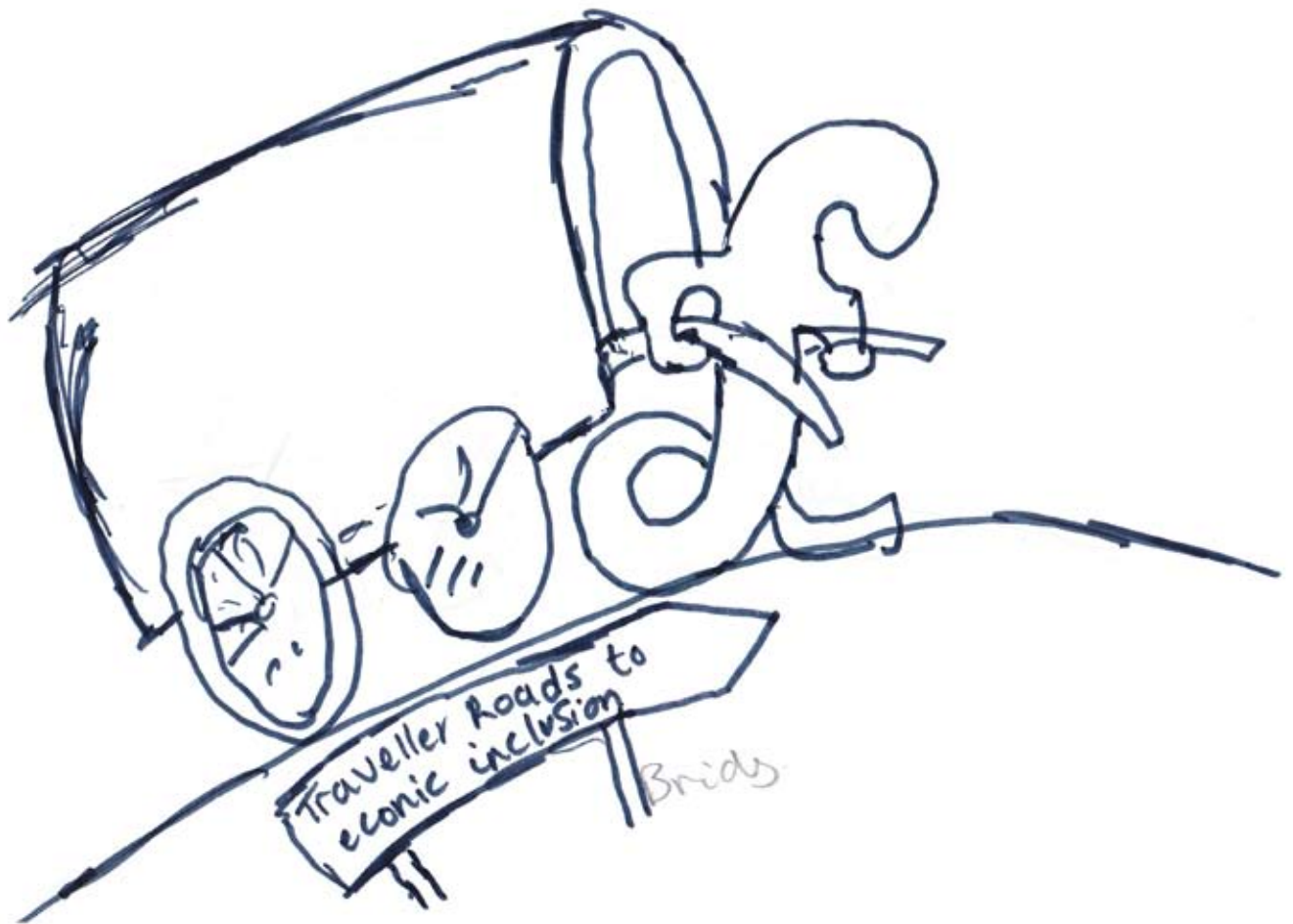
- \* enjoy an adequate and secure standard of living including nutrition, clothing, housing, warmth, social security, social services and utilities, and being cared for and supported when necessary
- \* have control over personal spending The capability to engage in productive and valued activities measured in the following ways:
- \* have a decent paid job, with support where necessary
- \* have rest and leisure, including holidays, and respite from caring responsibilities
- \* choose a balance between paid and unpaid work, care and leisure on an equal basis with others A number of related factors and EMF domains (e.g. accommodation, experiences of discrimination, educational and training opportunities which limit employment options) were found to have a clear impact on the quality of work experiences, standard of living and human rights of the interviewees. These are referred to separately within the Chapters in Part 3 of this report.

Table 8 below displays categories of employment for all participants in the TEIP study. Chapters 4-7 explore the 'types' of work and activities of respondents in more detail.

**Table 8: Employment Status of participants in the TEIP study**







# ***Chapter Four***

***The Traveller Economy: Traditional Work Practices and Adaptation***

## Chapter Four

### **The Traveller Economy: Traditional Work Practices and Adaptation**

#### **Introduction**

For Gypsies and Travellers, as with other groups in society, 'work' is a key determiner of material well-being, identity and self-esteem. Traditionally, for Gypsies and Travellers, work goes to the heart of their identity, with a series of economic practices and activities especially attuned to Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles (See Chapter One). The Traveller tradition of working as a family unit and utilising kin networks to gather information on potential work opportunities and the sharing of labour and tools has strengthened family and social networks. In this way, members of these communities engaged in traditional working practices have utilised community social capital by enhancing the economic value of existing social networks in a manner identified as particularly effective in reducing transaction costs and time and increasing profitability (Halpern, 2007: 44). This mode of self-employment has the additional value of allowing Gypsies and Travellers to carefully regulate relations and interaction with the wider community, whilst also regulating potential cultural change (Clark and Greenfields, 2006) in a manner which is particularly important to more 'conservative' community members (see further Chapter One). The centrality of work in Gypsy and Traveller identity management is captured in the following quote from one of the interviewees:

*"For us work is more than just a job, it's our way of life; it's who we are" (G M 51-60).*

The interviews undertaken within the study reveal that for a large number of those interviewed, change in terms of economic activity has been rapid and profound in recent years, leading to dislocation of traditional patterns and the risk of impoverishment for families and individuals who are unable to adapt to new circumstances. The great majority of the interviewees' parents were engaged in the traditional 'Traveller Economy', for whom trades such as scrap dealing, hawking and agricultural work predominated. Over the past thirty years these forms of 'Traveller economic activities' have given way to market trading,

building and landscape gardening. Although these are a different set of occupations, the skills sets and nature of the jobs are similar to those they have gradually replaced.

The common thread is that many Gypsy and Traveller interviewees, in common with their parents and grandparents, have remained self-employed in occupations where they have received little formal training. In the past, community members would occasionally enter into waged employment e.g. factories and construction teams (mainly providing un and semi-skilled labour). However, this sort of employment was typically for a short period as a stop gap during economic lulls experienced by those working in the traditional Traveller Economy. Only in the last ten years have a greater proportion of the community used waged labour as their economic mainstay (see Chapter 5).

Interviewees of all ages and working in a wide variety of employment types made reference to the hardships of 'traditional' work either they or their families had undertaken in the past. Typically such work involved working outside in all weather conditions, having to work as a family unit (bringing both benefits and problems if pay was poor or illness struck family members) and in many cases involving the employment of children working similar hours to adults. All too often such traditional 'Traveller Economy' work was conducted for a low rate of remuneration, frequently off-set against the ability to stop on agricultural land for the duration of a job, and with the benefit of access to fresh vegetables or newly caught rabbits whilst living on farmland etc. Despite the hardships of such work, many of these working experiences were looked upon with nostalgia by respondents:

*"We've had some bad times when my father was struggling to get bread money, in the winter months is the worst time to get a living, short days like we've got now and not a lot happening. We are in the credit crunch. Now people were in a credit crunch everyday when I was a child and my mother and father used to worry about feeding their family. If they could go out for a day to earn enough money to put bread on the table that would be all they were concerned with - to feed their family, and in the better times, coming the longer nights from February we would be on the road to go somewhere to do something better."*

*We never had no bad times it was happy times. We were a happy family" (G M 61-70).*

In the survey, only one of the G/IT sample now worked primarily in agriculture. This figure compares dramatically to the 1970s (and previous decades) as approximately eighty percent of

interviewees stated that their parents had worked solely in agriculture or undertaking such work in conjunction with other traditional Traveller economic activities such as scrap metal and 'dealing'. This decline in such work practices demonstrates starkly the dramatic rate of change that has taken place in recent years.

In the past Gypsies and Travellers enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with farmers. The farmers were provided with an adaptable, cheap and short term labour force skilled in agriculture and accustomed to hard physical labour. In return Gypsies and Travellers were able to maintain wide and extensive kin networks by spending part of the year visiting and working with family and community. They were also able to sustain nomadic lifestyles through obtaining the farmers' agreement to stop temporarily on their land (Acton, 1974).

It is therefore not surprising that the interviews reveal a corresponding steep decline in agricultural employment correlating to significantly lower rates of nomadism. Whilst a large majority of the interviewees aged over 30 record their parents as having been nomadic or semi-nomadic in their youth (with parents often having been 'born on the road'), and indeed respondents had often 'travelled' extensively with their family in their youth, few amongst the younger interviewees referred to their parents practicing nomadic lifestyles or experiencing it themselves. Only one of the interviewees who worked in the 'Traveller Economy' was still primarily nomadic (See further Chapter 8 which explores the impact of accommodation issues on economic activities).

In view of the historically close relationship that existed between the farming community and Gypsies and Travellers, it is not surprising that the report by the National Farmers' Union 'Rural Outlaws' (2003) caused much anger to those who recall the contribution of Gypsies and Travellers to the rural economy (FFT, 2003). The report, which has been critiqued on methodological grounds, (Richardson and Ryder, 2010) with particular

disputes over use of data claims of excessively exaggerated estimates of the cost to farmers of unauthorised encampments by Gypsies and Travellers, which, it was alleged were costing farmers 100 million pounds a year (NFU, 2003). The publication of this report characterises the sharp breakdown in the community networks and economic relationships which historically bound together Gypsies and Travellers and the wider community, in rural locations. This changing dynamic has occurred in tandem with increasing large-scale farming by consortiums and 'agri-barons' who do not have a personal relationship with traveling families who would once have returned to a particular farm on an annual basis and who are driven more by a cash nexus than connection to particular localities. The impact of these trends and the increase in competition for employment with migrant labour gangs has led to profound economic change for Gypsy and Traveller communities. The scale of change and dislocation in the economic experiences of many of the interviewees has been so great that it can be argued that the changes have been as profound as those which had occurred for working class communities engaged in traditional heavy industries. Gypsies and Travellers, in common with their dispossessed working class counterparts in de-industrialised areas, have suffered profoundly from the absence of coordinated interventions. However, public and governmental concern for the plight of Gypsies and Travellers experiencing economic dislocation has been even less pronounced than for those in declining heavy industrial areas.

Having set the scene for the changing employment climate facing those engaged in 'traditional' trades, the remainder of the chapter describes the remaining economic activities in the Traveller Economy existing today and explores both the experiences of individuals forced into less 'desired' work as well as examining how some families have managed to overcome the challenges of rapid economic change to achieve economic stability against all odds.

### ***The Traveller Economy in Present Times***

There has been a sharp decline in the 'Traveller Economy' in recent decades

Approximately forty percent of the G/IT sample (33 interviewees) worked in the 'Traveller Economy' (following traditional occupations).

This compares to the 80 percent of interviewees who stated that their fathers worked primarily in the traditional Traveller Economy and 56 percent who cited their mothers as being engaged in the traditional Traveller Economy (with a further 19 percent saying that their mothers were engaged solely in domestic duties which supported the family during the father's absence at work). This decline suggests a marked shift away from traditional economic activity as greater numbers of Gypsies and Travellers enter the waged economy as a result of changing gender roles, access to accommodation and altering work patterns (Cemlyn et al 2009). Table 8 (below) outlines the various trades identified by interviewees who worked in the Traveller Economy:

**Table 9 – 'Traditional Traveller Economy' occupations followed by interviewees**

Trade	No.
Markets/ Retail	9
Construction	6
Gardening/ Landscaping	6
Scrap	5
Agriculture	3
Culture/ Handicrafts	4

Remarkably in the light of the changes discussed above, work within the Traveller Economy continues to display traditional traits, most notably flexible employment patterns and an expectation of versatility, as reflected in the statement below:

*"Well, I haven't got a single occupation, I haven't got a career. I just do whatever we've got to do. Like I say it's all to do with work and trade. All through my life I've always bought and sold things and selling things or buying and selling to the public and calling and I've always done building work. Sometimes I've just done building, sometimes I've just traded" (G M 41-50).*

Kin networks form an important asset (social capital) within the Traveller Economy

For those working in 'traditional' trades such as gardening, tarmacing, drive laying, etc. kin and ethnic based networks ensure that a wide range of skills and use of shared (often expensive) tools can be brought together to complete a project on time and within budget. For example, in construction projects:

*"I can't do it all the time (a work project), but I know where I can get a man to do it. Yes, we're logistics specialists. I haven't been in the army or anything, but it's just putting it together, isn't it? If you are on a job there are some people you wouldn't let run a tap, but there are some people who are efficient, are on time and reliable" (G M 41-50).*

Interviewees working in traditional economic activities repeatedly stated their belief in the superiority of the Traveller Economy mode of employment over 'regular' waged work. Versatility and self-employment were therefore prized attributes and equated in the minds of respondents to Gypsy and Traveller identity, representing 'authenticity' and possession of 'cultural capital' (see Chapter One):

*"I think Travellers and Gypsies they are doing their own things and they just have their own ideas and they are very creative. They are always thinking of new things and they always pick up on things and they are doing it themselves" (G F 51-60).*

*"[The Traveller Economy] ..It's brilliant, I wouldn't swap it. It's a nightmare someone telling you what to do from 7 in the morning to 7 at night. I did that for 12 months and that was to avoid the dole, I've never been a scrounger and didn't want to go down that road. After a year though there was no one more relieved than me to finish the job and I threw their bleeper at them when I left" (G M 51-60).*

The Traveller Economy places an emphasis on informal family-based 'on the job' training and use of practical skills

In the Traveller Economy education is rarely considered a prerequisite for economic success. Informal learning (particularly gained through working with family members) and practical skills are often more highly prized. It should be noted that amongst interviewees engaged in the Traveller Economy, one quarter had received no or very little formal education. Whilst nearly two thirds of interviewees had received some education, this was mainly at primary school level and thus the overwhelming majority of



these respondents had no formal qualifications despite frequently being highly skilled. Only six interviewees working within the traditional Traveller Economy had gained any vocational qualifications (e.g. City and Guilds certificates in practical skills) and none had academic qualifications. However, this limited educational engagement was not regarded as a handicap by families and individuals involved in these traditional types of work:

*"I don't think better education is the answer. Some Gypsies can't read or write, but I think they have a lot more experience of everyday life and practical knowledge than the wider community" (G F 51-60).*

*"Well generally - like with the tarmacking - I did it from the age of 14 and if you are short of money and the job is there you just go and do the job. I'd like to know how many people have got a degree in dropping hardcore. If you can drop it right the first time you can do it a second time and if you make a mistake you can clear off and do something else" (G M 51-60.)*

A number of studies note that few Gypsies and Travellers access and benefit from business support (CRE, 2004; GTANAs reviewed and summarized in Appendix B). Whilst this lack of involvement with such services may stem from business support providers failing to reach this group, it is also possible that there is reluctance amongst those working in the Traveller Economy to accept such guidance (Cemlyn et al, 2010). The sense that there was no need for such formalised, bureaucratic involvement and reluctance to use such services was revealed in several TEIP interviews:

*"I don't need that [business advice and support] because Gypsies don't like being under authority. I'm not saying we don't like being under law, authority and law is two different shapes. Under authority means that you are told you must do this" (G M 51-60)*

Women are more likely than men to move away from the Traveller Economy into waged labour

Amongst interviewees working in the traditional Traveller economy there is a continued desire to work in such roles and considerable self-belief in the value of these types of work patterns. The vibrancy and preference for such types of employment is testified to by the fact that a significant number of the interviewers

were either engaged in such work or desired to work in such a way. However, there is an interesting gender dimension to employment preferences with males more likely to identify the desirability of self-employment and kin-group working patterns. In contrast, women appear to be increasingly entering into new economic activities (See further the section on 'waged employment' within Chapter 5). This move towards less-traditional, more mainstream types of working practice reflects the findings of other studies (Cemlyn et al 2009). Indeed a relatively small number of women below the age of 30 (approximately a quarter of the women sampled) were engaged in traditional forms of Traveller employment and in many cases their role was that of a home-maker whose contribution to the Traveller economy was supporting their husband and family through maintaining the household.

Overall the findings from the TEIP suggest that whilst self-employment was the norm amongst Gypsies and Travellers in previous decades, this trend is now changing fairly rapidly albeit that 'traditional' employment is still often regarded as a norm to be aspired to. A study in the East of England which interviewed young Gypsies and Travellers found over half aspired to self-employment (Bowers, 2004), yet even these findings indicates that a sizeable number of young people were actively considering employment in other sectors, perhaps in recognition of the fact that it was decreasingly possible to obtain adequate work in the Traveller economy, and hence waged employment was a responsive, logical step to the changing circumstances. This proposal is supported by review of GTANAs which also suggest a movement away from the Traveller Economy by younger generations (See Appendix B). Accordingly, given the core value placed upon 'traditional' work and the way in which this intersects with authenticity and identity the inter-generational transition indicates a process of change in the work-related cultural identity of many Gypsies and Travellers, a point that is developed further within this report in Chapter 10.

### Barriers to Working in Traditional Ways

#### Restrictions on 'calling' are causing problems within the Traveller Economy

Despite the popularity of the sector, interview data evidences some movement away from the Traveller Economy (particularly amongst women) and a growing sense of despondency about the long-term future of traditional working patterns. A number of factors appear to account for interviewees choosing to gain employment outside of the Traveller Economy or demonstrating decreasing levels of confidence in its viability. Interviewees frequently cited concerns about the restrictions on and campaigns against 'cold calling' (or knocking on doors to gain work particularly involving gardening, roofing, or laying drives).

Despite considerable public debate around the practice and frequent media stories about poor (and even fraudulent) practice by people who 'cold call' to seek work, in the UK there is no law to prevent such activities (House of Commons Library, 2010). However, in order to protect customers, howsoever they obtain services, the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) makes it an offence 'for traders to treat consumers unfairly through misleading actions, misleading omissions or aggressive practices' and states that, where a contract is agreed, the trader must allow for a 7 day 'cooling off' period when the transaction is valued at over thirty five pounds, during which time the consumer has the right to cancel the contract. Whilst it is right that consumers (particularly vulnerable or older people) should have the ability to be protected from aggressive or fraudulent traders, the increasing regulation and suspicion towards such activities have created some special difficulties for Gypsy and Traveller communities where 'calling' has been the accepted way of obtaining employment within the Traveller Economy. In some neighbourhoods local people have established 'no cold calling zones' where residents work with their local authority, Trading Standards Office and the police to prevent 'cold calling'. Regrettably, some interviewees claim that these new restrictions have led to police and trading standards officers harassing legitimate Gypsy and Traveller business people who secure work from doorstep calling. In a number of cases it was alleged these agencies were able to take advantage of Gypsies' and Travellers' lack of understanding of the law to deter them from

trading even when they were operating within the law. Particular difficulties were reported around understanding of, and compliance with, The National "Doorstep" Cold Calling Protocol which states that the trader should provide the consumer with identification, publicity materials and a landline number to check. The protocol states:

*"The organisation will provide a landline telephone number, preferably free phone, to facilitate employee bona-fide checks. This telephone number must be a direct line to a person/people and not utilise automated call management systems. Where possible this number should also be listed in the public telephone directory and other company advertising material."*

For some small Traveller traders with little formal education the precise processes that a trader has to enter into to engage in 'calling' can be daunting, especially as little support and assistance has been provided in many areas to help these traders conform to regulations. In particular, some small traders will not have had the capacity to conform with requirements which are needed to ensure that company advertising materials exist, and many do not have a landline number for the consumer to contact (as required by regulations), especially where the trader is fully nomadic.

The expedient growth in 'no cold calling' zones has increased the difficulties in obtaining employment 'on the knock'. In 2007 the consumer magazine 'Which' estimated there were 1000 such zones, covering 100,000 households in Britain (Which? 30th August 2007). In an article on this topic, Richard Berry, Director of the Direct Selling Association, said:

*'These zones have no legal authority and serve only to alarm and worry legitimate traders who call, like Avon ladies. These are totally unfair restrictions on human rights' (Which? 30th August 2007).*

The TEIP found a third of the interviewees engaged in the Traveller Economy reported significant concerns about 'cold calling' restrictions and the impact on their livelihoods. The lengthy extract from the interview below, reveals the negative perceptions that many Gypsies and Travellers have about the treatment of, and public attitude towards, doorstep traders:

*"What's killing the Travellers work in a big way is the stopping of cold calling you know it is illegal to knock on the door. Travellers are always earning their living by knocking on the door. They put out the leaflets. They are not allowed to put out the leaflets now, if you knock on the door you can be arrested for hawking. You need a license to do all these things.*

Most Travellers aren't settled so they haven't got a permanent address to get the license. They put everything in their way to say these Travellers can't work. It is like they are trying their hardest to find ways to put Travellers out of business and what is going to happen is you are going to have thieves because they've got to feed their children. That's why they go on benefits and that's why they go out and start stealing.

*Every time when you go out there and you are trying your hardest to get a job, someone brings a new law so you can't do this and you can't do that. That is the only way of life for Travellers. They are trying to get into proper jobs but how can you get a proper job on the side of the road if you've got to move everything in 24 hours? How are you supposed to make it into work every day when you get a knock on your door in the middle of the night 'can you come and move because the police are here'. Every single time when Travellers try harder they [authorities] are quicker and they find a new law to stop that." (G F 31-40)*

The TEIP believe that with adequate good will, constructive partnerships can be forged between Trading Standards Officers and Gypsy and Traveller business people to increase community awareness of restrictions and good practice approaches to 'cold calling'. We have been notified of particular examples of 'good practice' such as Trading Standards Officers in certain localities working in close partnership with traders to ensure that they are aware of restrictions and their rights. A further example of good practice was profiled by the Traveller Times Online which featured a Gypsy businessman who had joined a 'buy with confidence scheme', which is a list of traders approved by bodies such as the Trading Standards Office. Potential customers could thus look up his listing and see that he had been approved as following good practice and delivering an excellent service (Traveller Times Online, (accessed August 2010). Further examples of 'good practice' which have the potential to be replicated across the country to

assist in strengthening the 'Traveller Economy' are detailed in Chapter 12.

Traveller Traders are suffering from a lack of accessible information on restrictions on calling

Whilst the regulations are relatively complex in relation to 'cold calling' significant confusion was found to exist in relation to the current legal status of such activities. The TEIP found that some interviewees believed that 'calling' is now completely illegal and did not grasp that visiting homes and seeking to gain work through the circulation of literature is still allowed. This suggests that a number of Traveller traders do not fully understand the regulations, in part as a consequence of the fact that Trading Standards have not mounted a targeted information campaign on the regulations for Gypsies and Travellers which is accessible to people with limited literacy skills.

Despite this general lack of information dissemination to the community most likely to engage in such practices, it should be noted that one very important and commendable recent development has involved the Department for Business, Industry and Skills working in partnership with the Gypsy campaigner Joe Jones from Canterbury to develop a DVD to make Gypsies and Travellers aware of trading restrictions. This is an important initiative that can be built upon through widespread dissemination of the DVD and the development of materials in other localities.

The Traveller Economy can be physically demanding impacting on health and the duration of working life

Whilst Gypsies and Travellers working in the Traveller economy were proud of their strong work ethic, self-employed status and capacity to work long hours, the TEIP found that such punishing work regimes left very little time for leisure and relaxation or time spent with the family:

*"I worked 12 – 14 hours a day. I would get up at the crack of dawn while the family were sleeping and get back at 8/9 o'clock in the evening and they were asleep when I got home, I missed out on a lot with my family" (G M 61-70).*

Some of the activities within the traditional Traveller Economy remain physically exacting and potentially dangerous. Whilst in many



ways this is a by-product of the long hours often associated with manual labour which is a feature of this type of work, greater risk occurs partly because of the self-employed nature of the work and partly due to the fact that many Travellers have not had formal training in moving, carrying and safe use of tools. TEIP found that few of the interviewees had had health and safety training. A number of the older interviewees suffered significant health problems in later life with arthritis, joint problems and bad backs because of the physical demands of labour they had carried out when younger, a finding which is common to numerous GTANAs reviewed in Appendix B and often cited in reports on the health status of Gypsy and Traveller communities (see further Cemlyn et al, 2009; Matthews, 2008). Inevitably the impacts of many years of manual work have the tendency to limit (predominantly male) Gypsies and Travellers' years of working life. With a range of limited skills other than in their preferred trade, or poor literacy, it is unusual for Gypsies and Travellers working in the traditional economy to be able to seek alternative employment if their health fails, forcing them into dependency on welfare benefits.

In light of the limited knowledge on appropriate lifting, carrying or health and safety training TEIP suggests that targeted specialist training may diminish some of these health problems and raise health standards amongst men involved in the traditional economy. There may also be scope for a targeted campaign of awareness raising (perhaps through the production of DVDs or specialist advice stalls at horse fairs) through the auspices of the Health and Safety Executive.

#### Financial Instability is common within the Traveller Economy

The variability of income for families engaged in the Traveller Economy was regarded by some as a significant drawback to working in this way. Inevitably there were periods of time when work could tail off, for example during the winter, or longer-term, such as during the current recession. For others however the versatility of the Traveller Economy meant that they could readily develop a new trade or resume an old one if the demand for one of their services decreased:

*"I got married when I was 17 and I've been working since I was 15. I've done tarmacking for at least*

*7 years. 1 week we were tarmacking, week after that we could be doing a roof, week after that we could be building a barn or re-sheeting a barn, week after that I was probably moving a load of scrap. It was whatever needed to be done that week would be done. Then any jobs I had booked in advance we would seem to work around them. If in 3 months' time I had a big roofing job to do I'd try and get some work to build up to that and to build off that" (G M 31-40).*

*"I've been brought up my whole life and what's been drilled into me is be diverse, so that's why in my current job I do four trades running simultaneously because as one trend dips another one arises and if all four dipped then I would sell burgers on the beach" (G M 41-50).*

The above quotations illustrate the importance of versatility and flexibility to success within the Traveller Economy. Interviewees were quick to note that economic adaptation is easiest when operating in small business activities that only require limited resources and organisation, or when groups of relatives are working together to share materials and other resources or skills. However, given the resource demands of some activities such as landscape gardening, which can require significant financial outlay on equipment and not inconsiderable efforts to conform to current business regulations, quick and painless adaptability may not be so easy for people working in some fields. In support of this supposition the TEIP found evidence that bureaucratic hurdles meant economic versatility was harder to maintain for individuals in certain sectors of the traditional economy.

#### There is a lack of targeted business support for Gypsies Roma and Travellers

A number of Gypsy and Traveller males who had worked with their fathers to learn specialist skills eventually took over well established businesses with established client networks. For these individuals being able to draw upon the advice of their semi-retired parent proved an additional source of business knowledge, but simultaneously could act as a barrier to engaging with external sources of advice:

*"Business advice would work but a lot of Travellers they don't want advice they just think 'I know what I have to do'. I've had 20 years experience myself - what do I need advice for? A lot of the younger lads today they don't have to do anything, their dad does everything they just sit and relax because*

*they just follow their dad's business and it is ready for them" (G M 21-30)*

However, although such parental advice and support had proven invaluable in previous decades, the advice and guidance of older retired and semi-retired Gypsy and Traveller businessmen is not always as adept as in the past at helping to surmount challenges especially when these are centered on the greater formalisation and regulation of business and adoption of modern methods.

Very few of the self-employed G/IT sample had received business advice (10 percent of G/IT sample) and none at all mentioned Business Links, a localised business support service supported by the Government and theoretically available to all sectors of the community. This figure is significantly lower than the 50 percent of (general) ethnic minority business people who seek support and advice, a figure which is itself, considered low when compared to mainstream 'majority' businesses (Whitehead et al, 2006). In the case of some older interviewees, the TEIP found that they were reluctant to take advice, regarding this as contrary to their culturally preferred mode of practice, and gender expectations, instead preferring 'learn as you go along' approaches:

*"The only skill you can learn in the antique fairs if you buy something and lose on it you make sure you won't do the same thing for the second time. It's the only way how you can learn. There is only one way to learn about any business in the world buy something and lose on it and if you stick your finger into the fire you won't do it the second time" (IT M 71-80)*

However, these 'trial and error' adaptive approaches have the potential to be precarious, costly and inefficient. A number of interviewees reported that they would welcome business support and there was considerable interest in obtaining information on how to operate as a sole trader or registered company. Many of the self-employed Travellers with small scale business operations worked as sole traders. According to Business Links, becoming a sole trader is the simplest way to run a trade as it does not involve paying any registration fees and is simpler than setting up a company (Business Link website). However, although Business Links have regional offices their prime means of support is via the internet and through telephone operators which Gypsies

and Travellers are probably less likely to access.

The TEIP identified evidence that Business Links have not considered how effective the support offered to Gypsies and Travellers is in meeting their needs, as none of the nine regional Business Links offices contacted were able to inform the team that they had paid any attention to Gypsies' and Travellers' specific needs.

The TEIP would therefore recommend that agencies such as Business Links may wish to explore developing greater contact with Gypsies and Travellers through establishing 'enterprise coaches' who can provide targeted support to Gypsy and Traveller community groups. Such an initiative would also increase levels of engagement with the communities and allow Business Links' knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller employment related needs to increase.

Regional Development Agencies (RDA) have an important role in the development of local Business Links and economic support at a regional level. TEIP contacted (via email and letters) all nine English RDAs and none were aware of any targeted work for members of these communities. A search of RDA websites revealed limited reference to Gypsies Roma and Travellers within their documents or resources. RDAs in the South East, South West and North West do make some limited reference in Equality Schemes/Race Strategies and the East of England has similarly made passing comments on these communities within their business plans and board meetings but in no great depth, despite the fact that Gypsies and Travellers are the largest minority group in the East of England region.

Unsurprisingly, the great majority of individuals engaged in the traditional Traveller Economy were unaware of the business support they were entitled to access. This may in part be a reflection of the fact that there are virtually no 'enterprise coaches', (who give local advice and direct support to small businesses) in England working specifically with Gypsies and Travellers. It is worth highlighting that whilst one interviewee noted there was a business coach from the Traveller community in their area, there was a general lack of awareness and use of such services at a regional or national level:

*"There is not a lot of information and they are not aware of a lot of things. We have an enterprise coach [from the Traveller community] and she helps people and gives them advice to help set up their own businesses. The Travellers around here know about it because obviously she is advertising to them but Travellers across the country don't know about these things. No one is going out there and saying we've got this service, and you can access this service for free" (G F under 21).*

A lack of skills and training opportunities limits economic growth in traditional employment fields

Some Gypsy and Traveller business people reported that they were unable to develop their businesses further because of a skills gap. For some a reluctance to take external advice and support (perhaps related to cultural or gender expectations) compounded these difficulties. A failure to conform to regulations with negative impacts on business development was often aggravated by illiteracy. A lack of formal training in business practices could also cause difficulties for some respondents leading to a danger of exploitation or 'boom and bust' cycles:

*"It's a generational thing a lot more Travellers are supposed to stand up for their rights but I'm not sure how many my age are willing to do what I do. Some who got the right education leave the community. This will sound wrong but a lot of the regular Joes out there have no ambition, they don't want to change, because they are frightened of change. We've lost what we did have and don't know how to reach out and grab new skills so we're like headless chickens, we're running around, trying to get what we did have" (G M 51-60).*

*"My waste disposal firm was getting out of hand it was getting too big for my brain; it went as far as it could go. I could manage three men and three lorries but I didn't want any more it was just getting out of hand and I thought it was time to get out.... I know other Gypsy men who have got to that stage very big ways today and then on the other hand I know one particular Gypsy firm that got that big that they amalgamated with other big concerns and overnight it went bang, they've lost everything and they didn't know which way to turn afterwards" (G M 61-70).*

With support, some Gypsy Traveller business people are successfully adapting to new regulations.

In contrast, (particularly for family members

working in partnership, or where greater flexibility exists) signs of adaptation to new economic regulations can be identified. In particular there is a growing trend amongst some small businessmen to employ accountants to take care of their financial affairs. In a number of cases the wives (or daughters) of Traveller traders, who had accessed greater levels of education than their spouses/parents, were mastering book-keeping and associated skills to ensure that the family business operated within the law and was able to take advantage of grants or business development opportunities:

*"... there is a big push for the younger ones who are actually making sure that they are doing things the right way, getting registered and doing all the tax and everything. They go out and earn an honest wage, it is just doing the paperwork behind it and making sure that everything is accountable in what they are doing. Most of them actually have an accountant. The ones who are well into business and looking at managing their own business they all have a paid accountant and others then that would be their wives who would actually be doing the paperwork for them" (Connexions Advisor).*

Some Gypsy and Traveller business people are contracted to undertake traditional work by larger firms

A number of self-employed Gypsy and Traveller business men reported that at times they were contracted by larger firms to undertake their traditional trades, providing them with greater economic stability. Such contracts with larger firms could be particularly beneficial to skilled tradesmen working in this way, enabling them to access advice and support on tax and national insurance matters, as well as providing support through drafting and negotiating contracts. Such arrangements were especially common in construction:

*"I stayed on the farm till I was 19 and then decided to do things on my own and did a bit of calling until I was 21. I was paying my way, never going be a millionaire but never sponged off the state and have never done so in my life. At 21 I eloped with the wife and started working for large building firms and did regular work 7-5 stayed in that for a few years and then was subcontracted to do work and was self-employed on building sites, that's where I worked for most of my life and made my money" (G M 51-60).*

The majority of Gypsies Roma and Travellers respondents suffer from financial exclusion (poor access to financial services)

Few of the interviewees appeared to have benefited from financial services and access to financial products such as private pensions or business development loans. Thus, the TEIP findings confirmed evidence reported elsewhere of limited financial inclusion (Cemlyn et al 2009). Cultural opposition to loans was still common with a distinct preference noted for making direct payments rather than seeking to borrow money:

*"Well I never had the education. I didn't understand what borrowing meant and I didn't think it was right. I remember everyone saying buy your own machine (bull-dozer) and we'll give you as much work as you want but I wouldn't because I didn't believe in hire purchase. When you get something on HP they squeeze you on the price and you have to drive it to death to pay for it to earn a living whereas if I earned a living driving someone else's machine and it went wrong I still got paid. If it was my own machine I would have been under it half the night. I said I would go down that road when I owned a machine, I have had my own machine now for years and owe no one any money on it" (G M 61-70.).*

A number of the interviewees reported concerns that they would find it difficult to secure financial assistance from banks and other financial institutions (even if they wished to) because of their ethnicity or the fact that their address (when living on a site) revealed their origins to financial institutions who were perceived to be hostile to Gypsies and Travellers and to discriminate against them in accessing services (See further Chapter 10).

Despite this reluctance to utilise banking services (coupled with very real difficulties in obtaining credit for some families) economic resources could be accessed through practicing nomadism (thus reducing overheads) and using the kin-group as a single economic resource which enabled some families to save sufficient capital to purchase land or equipment without having to borrow from financial institutions (James, and Southern, 2009). This pooling of monies eventually enabled a number of respondents to buy a piece of land which could be developed as a private site or on which a bungalow could be built to accommodate older family members. Access to such sites

also facilitated business activities (see further Chapter 8) and the value of their property and success of their business could provide the head of the family with financial security. Ultimately this would allow the head of the family to pass the business and property on to the children in later life, who were thus rewarded for their earlier input into the family business and economic activities. Whilst this model was found relatively commonly amongst families engaged in the Traveller Economy, such iterative economic approaches may be harder to replicate in the future with the increased cost of land available for site development.

It should be noted that out of the 33 G/IT interviewees engaged in the Traveller Economy only one was predominantly nomadic, 25 respondents were mainly settled on sites, (the majority of which were privately owned family sites) and seven lived in housing. These findings are strongly suggestive of the fact that sites, frequently with attached work areas linked to the home base, but also located in close proximity to existing kin networks, facilitate the Traveller Economy through the maintenance of close social networks (Cemlyn et al, 2009).

A shortage of sites has a negative impact on the Traveller Economy

The TEIP findings are indicative of the proposition that a growing shortage of permanent sites is an important factor contributing to a move away from the Traveller Economy and into more 'mainstream' types of employment (See Chapter 8 for a more in-depth discussion).

The historian and activist Donald Kenrick drew much ire when he asserted at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Select Committee hearings in 2004 that virtually no Gypsies and Travellers would be nomadic within a generation and that the communities would accordingly adopt more sedentary lifestyles (ODPM Select Community Hearing, 2004). Such is the importance of nomadic practices to Gypsy and Traveller identity (Kabachnik and Ryder, 2010) that a number of Gypsies and Travellers were deeply critical of this assertion. In practice however, findings from the TEIP suggest that restrictions on nomadism and a loss of stopping places appear to have reduced economic patterns associated with nomadism for Gypsies and Travellers living in the UK.



It should be noted that the biannual caravan count of Gypsies and Travellers for July 2009 reveals that 579 caravans were on land they did not own (such as local authority or 'common' land) but which were 'tolerated' and not subject to enforcement action, while 958 caravans stationed on such land were 'untolerated'. For more nomadic Gypsies and Travellers tolerated sites may enable some economic activity through providing a base from which they could work, but such activities could be restricted by the terms of 'tolerance agreements' which often discourage work activity associated with traditional trades such as 'scrapping' or gardening which could generate waste (CLG, 2008). In contrast, residents on 'untolerated sites' ('roadside' or short term sites) are considerably more likely to be subject to frequent movement and eviction with the resultant negative impacts on access to work. One interviewee noted:

*"if you don't have a permanent address you can't get permanent work and a Travellers' way of life is dying, dying very fast. I mean what can they do if they got to move 7 days a week? How can they work in those seven days? They haven't got time to find work when they are constantly on the move"* (G F 31-40).

#### Changing regulation and employment patterns offer less scope for family based and child labour

Although a traditional cultural practice which enabled the dissemination of skills, a particular cause for concern in the modern world relates to the employment of children and young people in potentially hazardous occupations. Many of the interviewees (predominantly male) had worked as part of a family group as children and had learnt their current occupations through in-family training which laid the basis for current economic activities. As was noted in one policy report on education and training.

*"... children are frequently involved in dangerous occupations, work long hours, drive heavy vehicles well before age, and use potentially harmful tools and materials. Their parents may also be guilty of breaches in child labour, child protection and health and safety legislation"* (Ivatts, 2005, 13).

Although interview evidence demonstrated a sharp decline in child labour, TEIP data also found indications of under-age working practices in relatively recent times. Thus one interviewee recounted:

*"I stopped going to school [at 14] because we moved and I decided I just didn't want to start making friends again and everything. I enjoyed being on my own and I used to work on the fields and go to work on the fields and help out and look after the babies like my little brothers and sisters and that. My parents were happy with that decision"* (G F 21-30).

Whilst the involvement of children in employment remains highly controversial (particularly when working in dangerous circumstances) debates as to the rights and wrongs of such actions have to be balanced between considering the legal rights of children and the norms of culture and tradition which remain hotly contested within Gypsy and Traveller communities. Whilst the topic of child involvement in working practices (and indeed that of early school leaving/cultural age of attaining 'adult' status) is not considered within this report, strong research evidence suggests that a mismatch in curricular studies and levels of racism in school may also have some impact on parental decisions to reject conventional schooling and involve their children in the Traveller Economy (See further Chapter Nine).

Whilst legislative restrictions are reducing the number of boys who openly go out to work with their fathers (as was commonly practiced from around age 13 in the recent past), anecdotal evidence suggests that some families wait until boys are teenagers and look old enough to pass as a sixteen year old, and they are then encouraged to learn skills through work in the family group on an occasional basis or during school holidays and at weekends. Concern has been noted that raising the compulsory educational involvement age to eighteen is likely to place further restraints on the level and manner of adolescent involvement in the Traveller Economy for both males and females given cultural expectations of taking a more adult role from their mid-teens and typically early marriage and child-bearing during the late teen years.

Persistent anecdotal evidence supported by findings from the TEIP and other research (e.g. Cemlyn et al, 2009) indicates that restrictions on child labour are leading some teenagers who are alienated from school and not attending college to spend time on sites or housing estates with little constructive activity. It has been anecdotally posited (supported by supposition within the TEIP) that this may be

a contributory factor to teenage conflict with the law. On some local authority sites (and amongst housed community members living on housing estates) the demise of the traditional Traveller Economy has been particularly marked. Together with increased levels of marital breakup and breakdown of traditional control mechanisms for young people living in housing, this decline has been posited as a contributory factor to a rise in criminality and drug abuse amongst some young people (Clements and Morris, 2002; Cemlyn et al 2009).

### **Changing Gender Roles within the Traveller Economy**

Gender has an important impact on the type of work undertaken by Gypsies and Travellers

Restrictions on child labour inevitably have less impact on female children who may leave school early and make the transition to performing traditional domestic roles to support family members engaged in the Traveller economy. A large number of the female interviewees from 'traditional/conservative' families, stated that expectations of conformity to female gender roles were the primary reason why they had left school early as from their early teens they were expected to contribute to the family unit through undertaking domestic chores such as childcare, cooking or cleaning and engaging in homebased employment (e.g. winter production of holly wreaths, etc.)

*"The Traveller girls don't really get that much work. If they work it is more family based with their own parents or whatever" (G F 31-40).*

For some females from traditional families, marriage had meant no longer being able to work outside of the home and/or family unit, but instead emphasis was placed on the primacy of domestic duties and thus a return to supporting roles in the Traveller Economy (Greenfields 2008). Cultural restrictions, a lack of trust in the wider community and fears for safety meant that some families were hesitant to allow their daughters to work outside of the family unit. In addition, cultural attitudes to gender roles mean that some families would regard it as a slur on a husband's ability to support his family if a wife went out to work:

*"I was a sewing machinist. I've done that for about two years and then I got married. I never had to do it [since] because that is the way what we are, the husband looks after us. It is just the way the Travellers are" (IT F 31-40).*

*"My daughter she is 19 year old and she doesn't go anywhere on her own, she doesn't walk the streets. If you go to the villages you never find our children on the roads. We don't believe in it; that is the way we are. We can't let them go too far because it is our instinct. We are just not too trusting either that is because how we were raised and what we have seen so you don't want to put your child in harm's way. If my child has got a job I want to be where I can pick her up and drop her off. At the moment she can drive by herself but I still want to be able contact her when I need to make sure she is safe so I don't want her to go too far." (G F 31-40)*

Some Gypsy and Traveller women are changing and adapting through engagement with 'external' employment opportunities

There is evidence in the TEIP data to indicate that a number of younger women wish to develop their own businesses or enter into an occupation where they are not performing a secondary economic role. These changes represent a significant departure from the rigid gender roles and expectations of the traditional Traveller Economy. Amongst the younger female interviewees there was a strong interest in gaining vocational qualifications which would enable them to balance gender roles rather than performing a purely domestic role in marriage, as well as some evidence of young women deferring marriage to their early twenties rather than marrying in their teens (Greenfields, 2008):

*"The only thing is that when I was working in the past there were no Traveller girls working in jobs so it was like a big thing but now it is like all Traveller girls are working. It is not like a shame for the family, a girl is supposed to work" (IT F 21-30).*

In some cases such female skills development are seen as a prudent measure, in case the marriage fails and they are required to become the sole breadwinner. Such changing attitudes may be a reflection of slow but rising divorce and separation rates amongst the Gypsy and Traveller communities, which have been noted elsewhere and which appear to be most evident amongst housed Gypsies and Travellers (Cemlyn et al 2009):

*"When my daughter comes around 16 I would like her to get a job even if it is in a factory just to give her own independence that she can get work normally. If she gets a bad man who couldn't provide for their family she has to provide it herself so it does pay off to let them know what to do and how to do it if you need to survive. They have some fallbacks. I'd like all of them to get a job no matter what it is as long as money is coming in.... My daughter is having home tutoring every week, when she turns around 16 I'd like her to have a job even if it is only in a factory, even it is only packing boxes. It is all independence" (IT F 31-40).*

Single Gypsy and Traveller women are more likely to be employed outside the Traveller Economy in waged and low skilled work

Somewhat unusually, but perhaps indicative of their status as women who are working, approximately 50 percent of the overall G/IT female sample were single, a factor that may have enabled (or necessitated) their employment. This group of female participants were either young single girls (living at home with their parents and family) or divorced, separated or widowed older women. In the main (see further Chapter 5) these participants were employed in 'mainstream' labour.

Waged labour by female Gypsies and Travellers was also utilised as a mechanism for bringing economic stability to the household where a husband was engaged in the 'Traveller Economy'. Where a working woman had a self-employed partner, whose earnings fluctuated, a certain level of household income could be guaranteed where a female partner held a waged position. Thus, mixed working patterns within households can sustain the Traveller Economy.

A particular pressure for women who were seeking to utilise employment to support a household engaged in the traditional economy was the struggle to sustain gendered expectations. Departing from traditional roles could bring considerable strain. One professional female (a manager) from the Gypsy community recounted difficulties in juggling the demands of a pressurised managerial position with her traditional domestic duties. This interviewee revealed the tensions identified elsewhere of moving away from the Traveller Economy whilst being expected to conform to traditional and cultural expectations; a dilemma which has been noted elsewhere (Levinson and Sparkes, 2006).

*"It is a burden for me culturally because I still have the same burdens I would have if I sit at home all day and clean the trailer or the house. When I finish work I have to go out. As I say my mum is not very well so I have to do her shopping, help with housework and help my dad and I've got the children. It is a barrier for Traveller women that we are still expected to do the same things that we are always expected to do and fit the work in between and the family, no matter what the job stresses are out there, family has to come first. I do find that difficult sometimes" (G F 41-50)*

### **Innovation within the Traveller Economy**

Work related adaptation is increasing within the Traveller Economy

Although a large number of the sample working in the Traveller Economy felt that traditional work practices were becoming harder to sustain, approximately one third of participants engaged in this economic sphere had successfully adapted traditional models of the Traveller Economy and fused it with mainstream economic practices. A number of younger interviewees had supplemented their in-family training through undertaking formal training, for example attending brick laying courses and obtaining recognised trade qualifications. The TEIP identified an emerging trend amongst those interviewees who embraced innovation, in that these interviewees were keen to formally register their businesses and become certified practitioners in their particular field. In a number of cases such pro-active and innovative participants in the Traveller Economy had set up websites to promote their businesses.

*"I have an e-mail address and I have my own website with pictures of my work. I'm registered and authorised by the Environment Agency. It is just the way forward" (G M 21-30).*

*"The lads without any qualifications they've got no skills on paper, a lot of them can't read and write but are probably the best plasterers, the best roofers you'll ever see. They've got nothing on paper and I think they are beginning to realise if they don't do something to change they are not going to be able to earn a living. I speak from experience that's what I found as well. I come from a building background again with no qualifications and I realised if I carried on doing it I'm not going to make a living so I went back to school got some formal qualifications and that made a difference" (G M 31-40).*



### Less barriers exist to working in the Traveller Economy for those working internationally

A number of respondents engaged in traditional trades reported that they had been able to retain a nomadic lifestyle by travelling and working abroad. It was felt that in other countries (particularly in Europe) the restrictions found in the UK in relation to nomadism did not exist. On the Continent nomadic workers reported being able to travel and pull up for long periods without being subjected to a constant cycle of eviction as there is a supply of stopping places, (often used by tourists) and which unlike in the UK does not differentiate between employment related travelling and those utilising the facilities for leisure purposes.

In Britain for example, Gypsies and Travellers are often barred from using caravan club sites on the grounds that they are not holiday-makers. In contrast, interviewees frequently reported that when travelling abroad they were mistaken for caravanning holiday makers and thus were not identified as Gypsies and Travellers and hence did not suffer discrimination. Despite the rise in xenophobia against Roma on the continent many Europeans appear oblivious to the traits of British Gypsies and Travellers and have differing notions of how a Gypsy and Traveller looks or sounds (in opposition to the stereotyped conceptualizations of community members common in Britain, see further Richardson, 2006)

Thus ironically, the process of successfully evading ethnically based exclusion on the Continent is accentuated by the ability of British Gypsies and Travellers to appear acculturated and more easily blend in with the wider population (see Chapter One for a discussion of Acton's typology of adaptive characteristics) than do European Roma. Reduced levels of racism towards British Gypsies and Travellers on the Continent and greater access to stopping places often means that many respondents reported being able to operate on a 'level playing' field and secure work often at more lucrative rates than were achievable at home where they were regarded with suspicion. It is not therefore surprising that some Gypsies and Travellers have decided to remain abroad leading to reports of sizeable Gypsy and Traveller communities in Australia and America and on the Continental mainland.

*"Like I said I was very fortunate in my lifetime as I was brought up in Australia and the Aboriginals have that problem in Australia not Gypsies. For many years my dad used to say to me the Aboriginals are just treated like Gypsies and I never understood it, I never experienced it until I got back here and then when I was sort of seeing what was going on I just couldn't understand why do they hate us so much when they don't even know us. I lived the Traveller life but I lived a life in a country where it was accepted to travel. When I came back here I was 18 I just couldn't get over it (opposition)" (G F 21-30).*

Anecdotal evidence suggests that working abroad may now be more common amongst Irish Travellers than English Gypsies, with Irish Travellers working in construction and retail work in Norway, Germany, France and Spain in increasing numbers. The higher mobility amongst Irish Travellers may be a consequence of the fact that, large numbers of community members left Ireland in the post-war period with subsequent waves of migration in the 1970s and 80s. The relatively recent history of migration and subsequently diminished access to local authority/public sites when contrasted with Romany Gypsies (Cemlyn et. al., 2009), means that Irish Travellers are more accustomed to migration than longer established populations (Power, 2004).

Extended Irish Traveller family networks (for example the Sheridans) have a tradition of long distance and international employment related travelling and are thus well equipped to adapt and work in new and diverse economic and cultural environments, developing language skills and being able to negotiate and strike deals in a variety of languages when it is not possible to use English. One English Gypsy interviewee who worked in France as a doorstep trader took the decision to go to night school to learn French.

*"No, I had no other training, but like I said I did the colleges and did building and French, but this is more since I was married. The French came when we went to France and was over there working and when we came back in the winter I went and did the lessons, to do more speaking, you know what I mean to get the work" (G M 41-50).*

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of such language skills are learnt informally or sometimes as a result of Traveller children attending school whilst their parents are

working on the continent. However, it is likely that there may be greater demand for more formal language support in the future although demand to learn written foreign languages (as opposed to develop oral skills) may be low.

Migration and work abroad may in part be a response to economic and social exclusion, not least the shortage of official stopping places, legal restrictions on unauthorised developments and regulation of economic practices such as 'cold calling'. Grattan Puxon, the veteran campaigner interviewed about the Dale Farm Traveller site in 2007, made reference to international working practices followed by some residents for large parts of each year. Puxon noted that those men of working age used their authorized pitch as a short term stopping space during holidays and winter months, traveling for work purposes for the rest of the year whilst, leaving older family members, wives and children behind to access services such as education and healthcare which were not readily available whilst travelling (Basildon Echo, 9th November 2007).

#### Gypsy Traveller arts and heritage as a growth 'Traveller Economy' industry

For some practitioners of the Traveller Economy, engagement with the sector involves utilising highly skilled economic activities, in particular moving in new directions and taking up opportunities afforded by the growing Gypsy/ Traveller arts and culture industry. An increasing number of Gypsies and Travellers are working as self-employed artists who draw upon their heritage within their work, (most notably Daniel Baker and Delaine and Damian Las Bas). Others, such as the 'Clearwater Gypsies', have set up a 'trading post' for the sale of Gypsy artifacts such as paintings, traditional wagons, etc and Gordon Boswell through his museum of Gypsy wagons has been a pioneer in the promotion of Gypsy and Traveller culture. Increasingly trained (and often highly educated) members of the communities (including Roma migrants) are engaged in economic activities as poets, musicians, film makers, journalists, painters and wagon makers.

Involvement in culture and heritage activities are not new and indeed have been a traditional feature of the Traveller Economy for centuries. However, what is particularly innovative are the initiation of new forms of work, and the scale on which such industries are growing.

A major impetus to these activities has been the development of Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (GRTHM) which was first initiated in 2007, sponsored by the Department for Children Schools and Families to promote GRT culture in schools and the wider community. Part of this programme includes a capacity building dimension which has originated from the GRTHM guidance and which expressly encourages community members to develop their cultural skills for commercial purposes (GRTHM Guidance 2009). One Gypsy artist active in GRTHM described her work, whilst noting the potential that arts hold to challenge racism, and enabling her to retain her independence within the Traveller Economy:

*"I work for myself but obviously I work with different people when I do workshops attached to my exhibitions or I might go to colleges or universities to do lectures. As an artist I just work for myself and create my own work and then I get to do shows. I have gallery representation which means I have two galleries that show my work and they have my works permanently on their websites and they give me shows as well.... I'm lucky I don't really see my job as work because I enjoy what I do. I'm in a position that I can make the sort of work what I want to do but also mix with lots of really interesting people, so I get to go to so many interesting places and also arts are a really powerful tool for highlighting misrepresentation and all the other stuff that comes with that about being marginalised, so most of my work is about people who are on the outside and it is not just about being a Traveller" (G F 41-50).*

#### An important dynamic of Gypsy and Traveller economic survival has been cultural borrowing and adaptation

As has been noted repeatedly within this chapter, a number of respondents have informed the TEIP that they had repeatedly and regularly adapted their work to new markets, through utilising Information Computer Technology and conforming to new regulations in ways which are radically different from those of their forebears. Whilst such modes of economic activity may appear strikingly new, in fact such innovation is nothing new to Gypsies and Travellers. Indeed Acton writing in 1974 (and 1997) referred to the historical importance and validity of cultural borrowing and adaptation amongst Gypsies and Travellers, as detailed in Chapter One. The TEIP found that many community members engaged in the

Traveller Economy acknowledged both their determination to remain within traditional spheres of activity and simultaneously indicated their awareness of the necessity of adaptation if they wished to avoid the risk of acculturation and movement into paid labour within mainstream spheres:

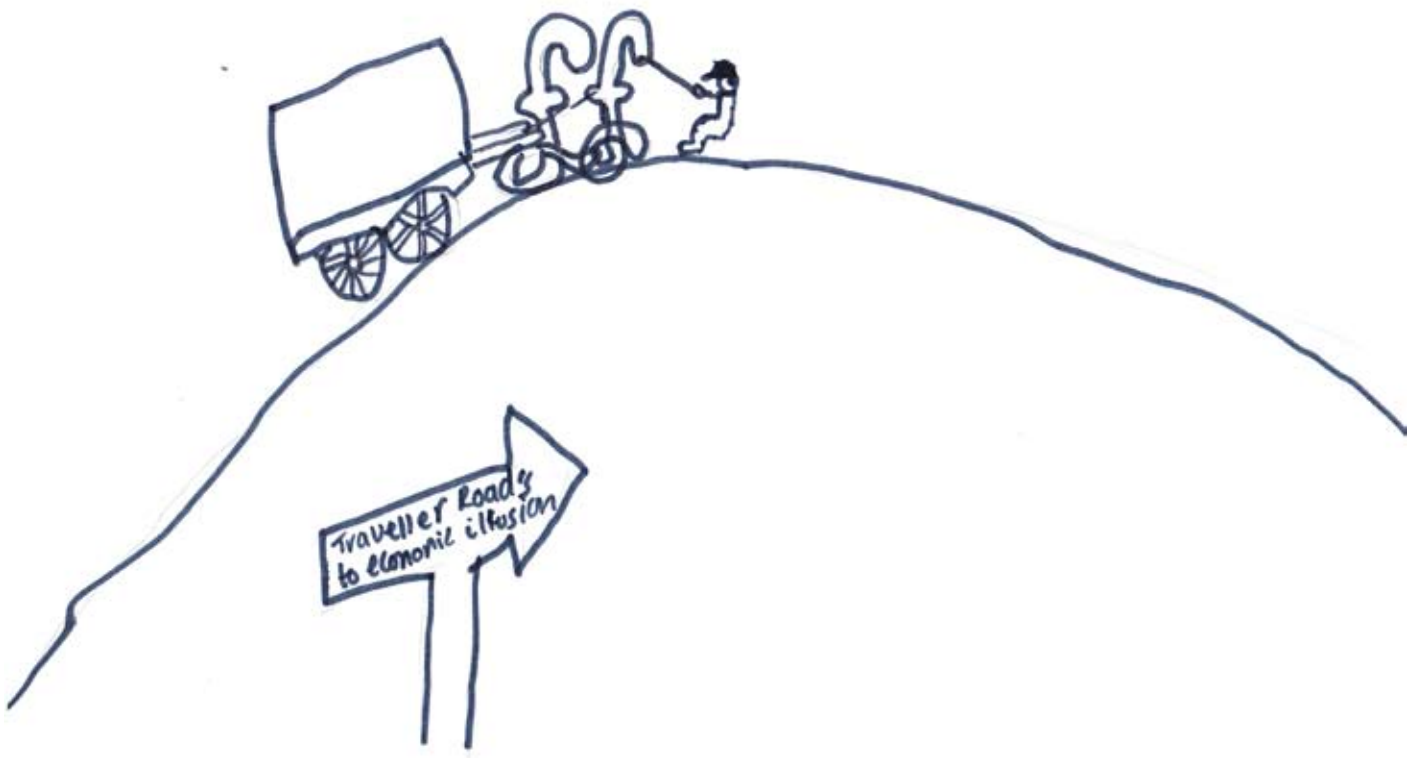
*"I want to get registered up and get my own business – you can't turn the clock back. There are more and more restrictions being put on people and it's impossible to work outside the system.*

*In five years' time people won't know Travellers from other people. In some ways it's a good thing, no one will be able to say they are better than us Travellers. We always adapt and have done in our history. When the farm work went away it was tough but we adapted and what with all this red tape there is now we will adapt again" (G M 21-30).*

Whilst the above quote could imply Gypsies and Travellers are on the verge of assimilation, the TEIP study suggests that with innovation Gypsies and Travellers will be better equipped to surmount the present challenges to the Traveller Economy without losing their innate cultural identity. Indeed Interviewees voiced such aspirations for the future and noted the positive changes these strategies could bring:

*"I think we have a lot of incredibly creative talented people with a huge history and personal characteristics of having overcome huge hurdles just to survive not only to survive but to survive and thrive. I'm very proud of the fact that the family unit is so important to us and we are so caring of the children and of our extended families. We've come a long way and we were one of the first ethnic groups to arrive in this country and one of the last to be recognized*

*I think the fact that there is less mobility now than there used to be is giving to the members of the community a chance to come forward and play a greater role in taking the community forward especially in terms of health and education and other opportunities. I believe that if this trend carries on over the next 20 years we shall have members of the community in all levels of employment and society" (G F 41-50).*



# ***Chapter Five***

***Waged Employment and Access to Welfare***

## Chapter Five

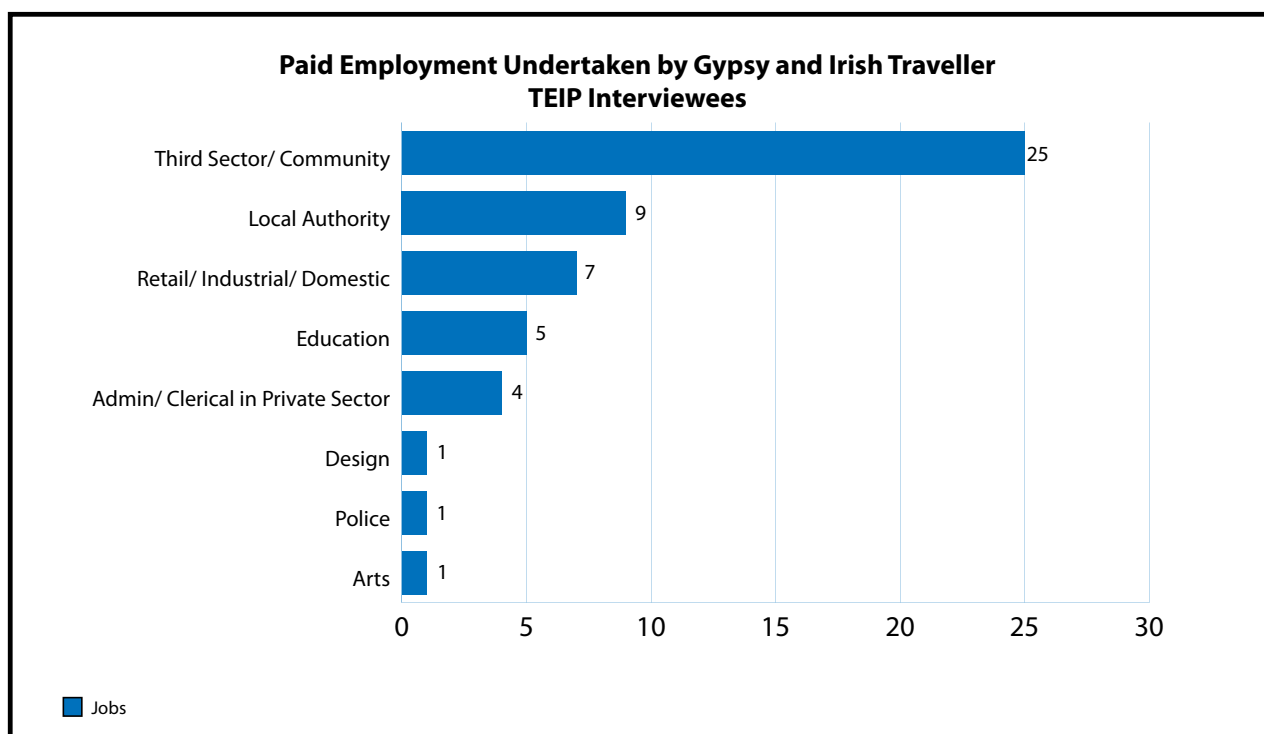
### Waged Employment and Access to Welfare

#### Introduction

As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter there have been significant changes in the traditional Traveller Economy in recent years, not least the sharp decline in community members working in these types of occupation, so that within a single generation a shift has occurred until only 40% of respondents follow 'traditional' ways of making a living. Concurrently, Gypsies and Travellers (particularly younger members of the community) have begun to engage with working in the waged sector, although a significant (and disproportionately high percentage of the population (see further Cemlyn et. al., and

GTANA analysis in Appendix B) have been 'left behind' economically, and have needed to resort to Welfare payments. This chapter explores these processes of employment transition and also examines the challenges faced by respondents as a result of changing work patterns.

**Table 10 below illustrates the range of 'paid' employment undertaken by TEIP interviewees**



### Waged Employment

Waged employment is a growing trend amongst Gypsies and Travellers

Despite the often negative views toward waged employment expressed by community members working in the 'traditional economy' and consistent with findings that a strong preference for self employment exists (Cemlyn et.al., 2009; Greenfields, 2008) working for a wage has always been a feature of Gypsy and Traveller economic practices in times of need. Sixty percent of the economically active G/IT interviewees interviewed for the TEIP were currently working for someone else, in fields outside of the traditional Traveller Economy.

As demonstrated by Table 8; 53 of the 86 Gypsy and Irish Traveller interviewees were waged, (18 male and 35 females). This equates to 66 percent of waged respondents being female, illustrating the preposition of gendered employment practices discussed within Chapter Four. It is likely that a far higher number of Gypsies and Travellers are working in the waged sector than we have identified but significant difficulties exist with accurately identifying precise numbers of these minority community members working in the waged sector as a result of lack of consistency in administrative statistics. Gypsies and Travellers are not listed as an ethnic category in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)/Office of National Statistics (ONS) UK Labour Force Survey (which is undertaken on a quarterly basis to obtain information on the UK labour market) and most employers who practice ethnic monitoring do not have a distinct category group for Gypsies

and Travellers. Hence, it is difficult to contrast data collected within the TEIP with wider datasets. (See further Appendix A)

Data pertaining to the waged employment of Roma and New Travellers is considered separately within Chapter Seven.

### Gypsy and Traveller Professionals (excluding information on Roma/New Travellers)

Whilst the TEIP may perhaps be unusual in having accessed a relatively high percentage of community members working as professionals, it is self-evident that Gypsies and Travellers are to be found engaged in a wide field of activities, albeit that they have often not self-identified by ethnic origin for reasons explored in more depth below. It is noteworthy that two thirds of the waged sample were women, supporting the identified trend for greater female engagement with paid employment and (potentially) higher levels of educational attainment. Table 12 details the professional roles undertaken by respondents

Contrary to stereotypes of 'unskilled' labour there are Gypsy and Traveller professionals working in a wide range of industries.

**Table 11 'Waged' employment sector by gender**

Third Sector	Local Authority	Retail/Industrial/Domestic	Educational	Admin/Clerical	Design	Police	Arts
25	9	7	5	4	1	1	1
M-6 F-19	M-5 F-4	M-1 F-6	M-2 F-3	M-2 M-2	M-1	M-1	F-1



**Table 12 Gypsies and Travellers in 'professional and higher grade' employment**

Type of Professional Work	No. of Interviewees
Community Group Managers/ Senior Staff	5
Statutory Sector (Social Work/ Local Government)	5
Arts/ Culture/ Education	3
Social Entrepreneurs- Site Management/ Managing Directors	2
Designer/ Inventor	1
Academic	1

In the TEIP survey of G/IT interviewees 17 interviewees (19% percent) were employed in a 'professional' role. Of these seventeen, 10 were female. Whilst our whole sample is not representative of the Gypsy and Traveller communities as a whole, for reasons rehearsed in earlier Chapters; the percentage of professionals sampled compares relatively well with other populations in Britain as the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2006) reports that twenty seven percent of the White British population are employed in managerial and professional occupations whilst significant variations exist for minority communities. Members of the Chinese population are the best represented ethnic minority group in this employment sector with nearly 40 percent of Chinese workers being professionals, in contrast to Black Caribbeans who are reported to have just under 20 percent of their population working in such roles. The Office for National Statistics do not have an ethnic monitoring category for Gypsies and Travellers so it is impossible to produce a definitive figure for professional members of these minorities.

Regardless of whether or not our sample is reflective of the wider Gypsy and Traveller population as a whole, the important point to note is that TEIP found a significant number of professionals from these communities, posing a direct challenge to economic stereotypes and assumptions pertaining to lifestyle patterns associated with Gypsies and Travellers.

Professionals who are not engaged in 'community specific' work are more likely to be of mixed heritage, housed and well educated

One key finding was that the professionals located outside of services related to Gypsies and Travellers (e.g. Traveller Education Services; working in Community Groups) were predominantly of mixed heritage (with one Gypsy/Traveller parent and another from the 'mainstream' population) and had been raised in a house, frequently remaining in education until compulsory school leaving age or later. Typically such professionals were highly acculturated and largely removed from traditional lifestyle patterns.

Significantly, given that population estimates have identified two thirds of the Gypsy and Traveller population as living in housing (CRE, 2006), there may be a significant number of 'unidentified' Gypsies and Travellers of mixed heritage occupying managerial and professional positions in Britain.

Conversely, research evidence indicates that where large groupings of Gypsies and Travellers are resident in housing, (in particular where they have moved from caravans to social housing as a result of site shortages), such communities are located in urban areas characterised by high levels of geographical and social exclusion (Shelter, 2007; Greenfields and Smith, 2010). Thus, community members living in such circumstances are likely to experience the same educational and employment exclusion as their 'non' Gypsy/Traveller working class counterparts, with a concurrent reduction in the likelihood of achieving professional employment.

We therefore posit the supposition that in contrast to more recently housed members of the community who retain high levels of bonding capital and preferences for traditional employment modes and social practices (Greenfields & Smith, 2010), it is likely that a significant number of Gypsies and Travellers have been housed for several generations and



thus exposed to a range of cultural influences which have encouraged them to develop greater bridging social capital (diverse social networks) and in some cases marry outside of the community. Thus, the numbers of people of mixed Gypsy/Traveller heritage are likely to be significant. In five cases where interviewees were working in professional occupations which were not directly related to Gypsy and Traveller issues the interviewees were of mixed heritage. This group of five interviewees all however retain a strong association in their identification with Gypsy and Traveller culture and access to networks of Gypsy/Traveller relatives. One interviewee (product designer) who was also a local authority Councillor, had only discovered their ethnicity recently as his father had hidden his ethnicity from his children and it was only in later life that he discussed it with them. The funeral of his father had brought the interviewee into contact with Irish Traveller family members.

The TEIP suggests that encouraging the reconnection of such acculturated and 'mixed heritage' professionals and others with more distant links to the community could have significant benefits in counteracting the effects of previous forced assimilation. Not only could it bring forward people prepared to be aligned with the community as a result of familial bonds, but such individuals have the potential to provide valuable support in terms of engagement with authorities and also act as mentors to young Gypsies and Travellers who aspire to professional status.

Overall, the trend towards increasing professionalisation noted within this section of the report is indicative of findings reported throughout the TEIP which indicate that the children of interviewees (in all employment fields) were likely to have achieved higher educational qualifications or participation in formal education for longer than their parents (See further Chapter 9). If this trend continues we would expect to see an increasing trajectory of entry into professional occupations (including law, medicine etc.) by Gypsies and Travellers in the decades to come. Interviewees across all sectors of the community welcomed such a development, recognising the value that professional community members could have as role models and practical advocates for their more marginalised peers.

Of 'professional' respondents, ten were employed in managerial/professional positions within community groups or working within services targeted explicitly at Gypsies and Travellers (e.g. community development, Traveller Education Service, etc.). Just under a quarter of the interviewees (six individuals or seven percent of the whole interview sample) were in professional positions with no direct link to the Gypsy and Traveller communities. That such a high proportion of the 'professional' sample who self-identify as Gypsies and Travellers are directly employed in community activities (and are thus 'known' to the TEIP team) may potentially deflate projections as to the size of the professionally employed Gypsy and Traveller population in Britain. However, we feel able to confidently assert that significant numbers of people with more distant Gypsy and Traveller heritage are employed in professional roles, (as may be posited from attendance at events such as Roma, Gypsy, Traveller History Month cultural activities or Romany and Traveller Family History Society events). As considered in Chapter Six (which provides a more in-depth discussion of community related employment/roles), findings suggest that Gypsies and Travellers who are the first members or their families to enter atypical employment and achieve professional success may be more likely to be situated in culture-specific sectors as a result of the support mechanisms available and because such roles constitutes a mix of both the Traveller world and that of mainstream society.

### **Social Mobility and Employment**

Approximately 60 percent of the TEIP interviewees who achieved professional status were women indicating as already outlined above a greater tendency to move out of traditional work spheres and educational and training achievement suggesting slightly greater levels of social mobility amongst female interviewees. However, not all of these had achieved success through conventional career and educational routes.

Social entrepreneurialism offers a route to success and social mobility for Gypsies and Travellers

Four Gypsy and Traveller social entrepreneurs had reached professional positions despite having little formal education, providing

evidence that alternative routes to such status did not always necessitate conventional academic and career progression. Often these highly successful Gypsies and Travellers had started their working lives engaged in traditional trades within the Traveller economy but through adaptation and accessing post-compulsory education which suited their needs, they had reached managerial positions. The following section considers the challenges and opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers moving into professional fields.

Whilst we have found evidence of considerable success amongst some respondents engaged in sector specific career development, some Gypsy and Traveller entrepreneurs reported that establishing a community group could be a precarious enterprise as such agencies and individuals did not always enjoy financial and career stability. Thus, opting for such a route to professionalism could cause strain for staff in terms of constant pressure to fundraise and worries about income and employment instability (See further Chapter 11):

*"When I set up (a Gypsy NGO) myself and my sister got the organisation going and we went to meetings and picked things up. I can't spell very well but I can read. I usually get someone else to do the paperwork but I'm good on the accounts ... I love to help people in the community. I'm voluntary now because we have no funding but I used to be the project officer and used to run a lot of cultural awareness talks but we've got no money for work at the moment.... I don't want a huge wage just a fair wage. A job like this it's not about the money it's about satisfaction. If you can help someone achieve or change something you got that little bit of satisfaction". (F G 51-60).*

### Challenges to Social Mobility

The TEIP identified that whilst there are opportunities for social mobility for engagement with the community sector, that a risk exists that individuals who take this route may find themselves sharing the fate of a number of Roma 'third sector' workers on the Continent who have found themselves in a 'Glass Box' unable to move from working solely with their own community and unable to make the transition to the public sector; in part because of a lack of conventional skills or because skills they possess are not recognized outside of their identified zone of expertise (ERRC, 2009). Yet other community workers

report being hesitant to seek employment outside of a sector where at present they feel secure, accepted and protected from racism (ERRC, 2009). Whilst these barriers exist, it is difficult for Gypsies and Travellers to gain wider experience in a range of agencies, and in so doing, challenge stereotypes about their communities common in other professions and wider society. One positive example of such translocational recognition identified by the TEIP, involved a police officer who was of mixed Gypsy heritage. He believed that his respected position within the police force actively challenged negative perceptions about Gypsies and Travellers long held by his colleagues.

In addition to the barriers to movement for specialist staff, opportunities to career development within more conventional and formalised work sectors are rapidly receding as a result of present 'cutbacks' in public services. Additional challenges occur as a result of tacit grade inflation where highly qualified individuals who may have had significantly greater educational opportunities than TEIP respondents are competing for jobs which in reality warrant lower level qualifications or 'on the job' training. There was a perception by one female Gypsy (employed at managerial level in the statutory sector) that the opportunities to enter this type of secure employment at the lowest level and 'work your way up' as she had done, were now non-existent:

*"I came into the [statutory service] at the lowest grade and I have managed to be promoted five times to do my current grade. I don't think that those opportunities are there any more for anybody from the community. Basically we recruit a lot of those at the most basic level from university graduates, I now fear the same opportunities for the community to get involved like I had are not there now. They are recruiting the lowest level at graduate level now" (G F 41-50).*

For a number of professionals interviewed for the TEIP the leap in social mobility had been profound, enabling them to move from traditional employment to professional status. Sometimes this could lead to challenges from their own community members who perceived of them as becoming 'gorjified' (Greenfields, 2008) as well as doubts and anxieties as to whether the way they spoke and presented themselves could cause them career difficulties. One academic who had previously been a builder recounted:

*"I have to prepare lectures, research, do administration. You need to absorb things quickly, often you are only a couple of pages ahead of the students. You also need to communicate well and that has always been a problem for me. I remember at university as a student they used to laugh at me when I spoke in seminars or they took the piss out of the way I spoke. One of the lecturers once said to them "you wouldn't laugh if he was black and had a Caribbean accent". I have to communicate clearly and moderate what I say [to use 'academic' language]. I remember at university when the essay marks came in I realised they [fellow students] were not that bright but had the persona" (G M 41-50).*

Despite the challenges to working in 'mainstream' employment, several interviewees felt that their background equipped them particularly well for the challenges of their professional work. Traveller ethnicity and experience of working with 'non-mainstream' populations were regarded as a useful asset in some forms of employment. Two of the interviewees, (both working in the criminal justice system but not directly with Gypsies and Travellers) felt that their life experience, cultural traits and developed life skills suited them especially well for their challenging work roles:

*"The skills I've got, I possess - which settled people and organisations find are useful - is risk management and when you are a Gypsy/Traveller person you manage the risk from being a very small individual, because you live on the edge of society. Really you have to learn how to risk assess and manage risk .... One thing that Gypsies can do, they can talk, they can communicate and they can make people understand what they need and don't need and those skills are just vital in the world anyway. You learn to listen but also to gain and take knowledge which my people enjoy doing. Other skills that I possess, numerous of them, are from our cultural education as well as formal" (G F 51-60).*

### Routes into Employment

Volunteering is an important first step to employment for many Gypsies and Travellers

For those individuals who are currently out of work or who are hoping to find employment within the third sector as a way of moving on from traditional work practices, volunteering with community groups has significant benefits in terms of skills development.

Amongst the third of the TEIP sample who are employed in the community sector, virtually every respondent reported that they had found volunteering and activism invaluable preparation for their work. Interviewees reported that they had often combined voluntary work with paid employment on temporary short life projects which had allowed them to gain confidence and experience, in turn leading to full time employment

*"I do this voluntary work with [community group] and try to encourage Travellers - making them more aware of life and how to change in an economic sense and stuff like that which the Travellers are not really aware of. I'm just learning bit by bit myself each time I come here. I like doing it because I find it very interesting, it's very worthwhile in the end because it gives you more confidence to know what you are talking about and where you come from" (IT F 51-60).*

One female interviewee discussed the ways in which volunteering could help Gypsies and Travellers to assess work options and ultimately obtain waged employment as well as enabling them (often unconsciously) to act as community ambassadors who are accepted within 'mainstream society'. Such intercultural engagement leads to greater mutual understanding of cultures and communities:

*".. a lot of Travellers are the same as what I was. They don't have any qualifications but are quite capable of doing a job. I've been working with a lot of Travellers across the county and get them into schools on a voluntary basis. Once volunteers have been police checked, once they've turned out to work well and get on with the families and staff realise that they are not going to be monsters and turn the children into 'God knows what', then they've actually got jobs at these schools and work as Teacher Assistants, as Pre-school Key Workers in primary schools" (G F 21-30).*

A significant number of the interviewees who were (or who in the past) engaged in voluntary work were female lone parents in receipt of welfare benefits. For some of these respondents, a considerable barrier to volunteering and ultimately making the transition into paid work consisted of negotiating welfare benefit regulations. Where paid work exceeds 16 hours per week the general rule (at the time of writing subject to change as a result of the Autumn 2010 welfare benefit review) is that the claimant will not be entitled to receive Income

Support benefit and will then need to make the transition to receipt of 'in-work' benefits. Moving to 'in-work' benefits entails the graduated loss of 'passport' benefits such as housing benefit, free school meals, free prescriptions, etc leading to hardship for a family who will need to find travel to work costs and associated expenses as well as paying for services (e.g. council tax) which had heretofore been free of charge (Centre for Social Justice, 2009).

Where work is short-term (for example on a summer project) the delays in re-activating benefit claims may be regarded as placing the family in too precarious a situation to warrant making the transition to paid work. Currently unemployed Gypsies and Travellers who were working as volunteers informed the TEIP that benefits restrictions which limited the hours during which they could be available to act as volunteers also meant that community engagement could become haphazard and unstructured as well as diminishing opportunities to undertake training. Overall the Benefit system was perceived as restricting involvement in volunteering activities.

In recognition of the difficulties in moving away from Benefits to paid employment some community organisations have called for the Government to establish a "Community Allowance" which will serve the dual purpose of supporting people into work whilst assisting communities with regeneration programmes (Ainsworth, 2010). The campaign is lobbying for community organisations to be able to pay a small allowance to unemployed people to undertake work that strengthens their neighbourhood and locality, without loss of Benefits. It is argued that the Community Allowance would create new jobs by enabling community organisations to pay local unemployed people to undertake part time, sessional or short-term work within their local area. The unemployed person would be able to keep these earnings on top of their benefits, and would also have the opportunity to learn new skills. Such a programme would effectively 'make work pay' as well as providing a stepping stone to employment. Campaigners suggest that the DWP consultation on welfare reform has, to date, not sufficiently engaged with this proposal although (Ainsworth, 2010) optimism exists that with the emergence of the 'Big Society' agenda, pilot projects may be supported in trialing such schemes. The TEIP suggests that such programmes are

likely to effectively deliver 'Big Society' goals through creating better staffed and resourced community groups who can be more proactive in delivering services. In particular, we suggest that should such a reform occur it holds the potential to strengthen Gypsy and Traveller social mobility and bolster the fragile GRT community sector.

Despite the complexities inherent in moving into paid work for those formerly in receipt of benefits, overall, the majority of waged interviewees expressed satisfaction with their present standard of living or had relatively modest additional material ambitions. For those respondents who had achieved managerial and professional status their present pay levels usually represented a large relative advance on their previous income. One manager recounted:

*"Personally I'm happy with my income because it pays my bills and that's all I have to do at the end of the day. My wife is on a poor wage, we both used to be on very poor wages and it was a real struggle but personally I'm happy, I'm paying my bills so I'm more than thankful for it" (G M 21-30).*

Gypsies and Travellers in the waged sector expressed very little discontent about employment conditions. This may be attributable to the fact that many of the interviewees had known great hardship during their lives, working in poor conditions for low returns and thus their present situation was one of relative comfort and security even if (non-Gypsy/Traveller) colleagues were often satisfied. A male Gypsy who had become a professional level employee in a university said:

*"...people all moan about their jobs and academics do this a lot, it's all they know but I think my expectations of work are lower. I've had jobs where if you are no good they will tell you to clear off. So I find my present work quite privileged" (G M 41-50)*

Outside of the field of 'professional' employment the TEIP found further examples of Gypsies and Travellers adapting rapidly to new work environments and experiencing dramatic change in their lives as a result of taking chances and seizing opportunities which arose.



### **Gypsies, Travellers and Service in the Armed Forces**

There is a strong tradition of service in the armed forces by Gypsies and Travellers leading to new career opportunities and skills development

One key finding from the TEIP was the relatively high numbers of (male) G/IT interviewees who had entered the armed services. In addition a significant number of respondents of both genders had relatives who had had either served or who were serving in the armed forces. Three male interviewees had been in the services as a result of Conscription during World War Two or through undertaking compulsory National Service during the post-war era. A further three men had enlisted voluntarily (post conscription). Another five interviewees made reference to children/family members who were currently in the armed services. Overall this equates to 11% of the sample with personal experience or close family connections to the Forces.

All of the respondents, who had seen service in the armed forces, reported that this period proved to be a positive and life changing experience. Three men learned to read and write in the army having had no formal education before their period of service:

*"I Joined the army in 1966 and I learnt to read and write up to a point because I did the army certificate of education to level 3. Once you can do it you wonder how you ever lived without it, I love books" (G M 61-70).*

Other men gained important qualifications in the army as well as experience and confidence with dealing with a diverse range of people and situations:

*"In the army, I went in 1950 and did my national service, everybody was called up, if you didn't go you went to prison. I signed up and stayed on and did 5 years. I did my army third and second class exams and passed them. I did city and guilds at technical college after the army, higher national in engineering. I'm a teacher of woodwork. It took me about 10 years after the army to achieve what I wanted to achieve. I was away from the family for five years in the army and I think that made me into another person and gave me responsibility and it gave me something to improve the family way of life..." (G M 71-80).*

Whilst no evidence was available on the training/career paths being undertaken by respondents' children or close relatives who are currently in the Forces it is likely that this tradition of utilizing a period of Service to attain transferable skills which can then be used in civilian life will continue amongst Gypsies and Travellers. In addition, opportunities for former services personnel to move into new fields of employment are likely to develop further in years to come as a result of an increasing emphasis on supporting ex-services staff into employment (Drury, 2010).

In contrast to the findings relating to employment mobility opportunities for individuals who have been in the armed forces or who have worked in the community development sector, TEIP has found that the chances for advancement in other sectors of the waged economy appear to be more restricted for Gypsies and Travellers with limited educational qualifications.

### **Lower Skilled Waged Employment**

Women below the age of 40 were more likely to be working in lower-skilled and low-waged employment

**Table 13: Other Employment Paths**

<b>Cleaners</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Clerical/ Secretarial/admin</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Retail</b>	<b>2</b>

Respondents within the 'non-professional' category (approximately 13% of the sample) were predominantly female. Four workers in this group were engaged in clerical, secretarial and administrative jobs in the private sector. All of these respondents were Gypsies and Travellers who had accessed formal education. One was employed as a high level company secretary/PA and came from the Irish Traveller community. Her parents had moved into a house prior to her birth and she had therefore attended both primary and secondary school. Despite her close identification with her community this woman (and her husband) had adopted more 'mainstream' practices in that she remained working and contributing to household expenses and mortgage repayments even though she had children. Such behaviours are contrary to 'traditional' Traveller gender expectations, and thus life histories of this type demonstrate the profound changes in both gender roles and work related practices which have taken place in the space of a single generation.

Of the other seven respondents within this category, six women (7% of interviewees) were working in relatively low grade, lower skilled occupations and in receipt of low (often minimum) wages. The occupations followed by this sub-group of interviewees consisted of working as cleaners, kitchen assistants or in the retail sector, jobs which could all relatively easily be combined with domestic duties. The one male in this group was employed at a more senior level than were the women, acting as a cleaning supervisor. Only one interviewee in this group was aged over forty. The growing trend for Gypsy and Traveller women with school age children to enter low paid/unskilled occupations has been noted in GTANAs and in the limited number of research studies which explore employment (Cemlyn et al 2009; GTANAs summarised in Appendix B).

A number of the other interviewees (for example now in professional roles) reported that they had worked in factories and other low waged work prior to entering their current roles. For these other respondents such work had been short term and they typically left paid work once better opportunities had arisen in the traditional Traveller Economy.

One interviewee recounted how she alternated between traditional and waged employment:

*"I worked in a factory and after that I worked in offices doing some cleaning and after that I worked in a chip shop and I still do the traditional Traveller work as well in between - seasonal work. So I do a kind of mixture of all different types of work. Working is not too bad because in the field you are working with your own people but in my 'proper job' you've got to interact with a lot of different people and that is a bit strange"* (G F 21-30).

It is less likely that such movement between traditional and waged economies will occur in the current economic climate and potentially therefore lower skilled Gypsies and Travellers could find themselves caught in a 'skills trap' where they are unable to find more lucrative or interesting work without attaining further qualifications.

Gypsies and Travellers in regular waged employment are likely to be sedentary

Most respondents in the 'lower skilled' category were receiving the minimum wage for their work. Of the female interviewees who were earning low wages, one was a student working to help pay for her studies and the remaining interviewees had taken such work because they were the sole income earners in their households, (all being lone parents). Recent welfare reforms and forthcoming changes announced in the aftermath of the 2010 Spending Review will increasingly compel lone parents to take some form of employment even if this does not substantially improve their financial circumstances. Of the women in these circumstances who participated in the TEIP all were in receipt of 'top up benefits' to enhance their low wages.

The accommodation status of participants in low paid employment was secure and sedentary, enabling them to access regular waged work. Half of these interviewees were socially housed and half were resident on sites which were predominantly owned by local authorities. For housed women in work in particular (although to a lesser extent amongst those resident on authorised sites) there is some evidence that the transition into paid employment may be influenced by the activity patterns of workers in the wider community with whom they reside in close proximity (Cemlyn et al 2009). Changing welfare regulations will doubtless increase the trend for lone parents to move into work although

it is likely that for Gypsy and Traveller women with low levels of qualifications and potentially poor literacy skills they may face even greater exclusion than other applicants for this type of work with resultant downward pressure on wages. This trend has added relevance considering that the TEIP found the decline of the Traveller Economy to be most marked on housing estates and local authority sites.

Despite the relatively low wages earned by respondents in this category most of these interviewees expressed great pride and satisfaction in their employment status, a finding which is congruent with the Gypsy/Traveller identity trends of self-reliance. Overall however, the low levels of educational attainment found amongst the wider Gypsy and Traveller group, (See further Chapter 9) combined with a weakening of the Traveller Economy, is likely to mean that increasing numbers of Gypsies and Travellers of both genders will need to seek employment in low waged and unskilled positions in the years to come.

### **Access to Benefits and The Informal Economy**

As stated throughout this report there is anecdotal evidence of high levels of unemployment amongst Gypsies and Travellers as a result of declining work markets. These trends are to some extent evidenced by GTANA data and supported by the (limited evidence as a result of reluctance to self-identify) proxy data on take-up of free school meals amongst Gypsy and Irish Traveller pupils. The information on receipt of free school meals is typically regarded as proxy measure to identify rates of poverty amongst a range of excluded groups. According to data supplied to the TEIP by the Department of Education, take up of free school meals stands at 46 percent of Irish Travellers and 39 percent of Gypsy/Romany pupils, a figure which indicates extremely high levels of economic exclusion and reliance on welfare benefit payments (Department of Education, 2010).

A common stereotype is that Gypsies and Travellers work in the informal economy

A commonly levelled accusation against Gypsies and Travellers made within the 'popular press' is that members of these communities have a tendency to work in the informal economy where tax is rarely paid. It has been argued

that such perceptions are highly inflammatory, posit inflated figures for such activities and are founded on prejudice and stereotype (Webster and Millar, 2001; Kabachnik, 2009). Informal work is defined as 'production of goods and services which take place outside formal employment, i.e. in black or grey parts of the economy (Pfau-Effinger, et al. 2003). Money does not always exchange hands in such transactions and in some cases it is based on reciprocity and exchange of mutual support (Evans, 2001). Research findings consistently note how, within the limited economic prospects of a post industrial society, some marginalised groups have secured greater (relative) economic well-being by opting to be located in the informal economy (small scale 'cash-in-hand' work in addition to receipt of Benefits) as opposed to engaging with low waged labour (Smith, 2005). This strategy, in common to that utilised by members of any other marginalised community has been adopted by some Gypsies and Travellers. In particular, for individuals who have low levels of formal education and limited opportunities in the waged economy it is a logical economic strategy to opt to participate in the informal economy on occasion.

A common tabloid press stereotype is that many Gypsies and Travellers are 'cash rich' 'wheeler dealers' who are working in the informal economy. For example, Richard Littlejohn of the Daily Mail made a vitriolic attack on the publication of a book about Travellers' culture and values. Littlejohn claims he knows what the story should really say:

*"Here in the real world, Tess would be claiming welfare benefits while pocketing the cash without declaring it to the taxman. She would be driving a £50,000 Toyota Landcruiser (running on red agricultural diesel) with a stolen lawn-mower in the boot; living on either an illegal camp site or in a subsidised council house; and running a tarmacking gang" (Daily Mail, 12th August 2009).*

In practice, evidence from the TEIP found very low levels of engagement with the informal economy with some participants reporting that they had resorted to such work only when times were extremely difficult or they knew that declaring income to the Benefits agency for a one-off or very short term piece of work would lead to stoppage of benefits and difficulties in re-establishing a claim, potentially leading them into rent arrears or other forms of debt.



Thus, working in the informal economy is closely linked to the discussion on benefits disincentives exercised above when considering volunteering opportunities.

Those working in the informal economy are particularly vulnerable

Despite the stereotypes utilised by Littlejohn in the above article the majority of people working in the informal economy are highly vulnerable, seeking to escape the extreme poverty and exploitation of low paid jobs (Need not Greed, 2009) and the complexities of the benefits system which have an effective combined tax rate of considerably greater than the rate paid by the highest earners in this country (essentially a benefits taper in excess of 85% of earnings for those claiming top-up earning to assist with their rent and council tax – see further, Centre for Social Justice, 2009)

As noted above the benefits system is highly bureaucratic and inflexible leading to serious delays and a loss of benefit for those who work fluctuating hours, as is the case with many Gypsies and Travellers working in the traditional Traveller Economy. Accordingly, such an inflexible system creates a major disincentive to declare monies earned in addition to Benefit payments (Russell, 2009). For some interviewees low pay could act as a disincentive to entering the labour market. One female respondent said:

*"...it wasn't really worth me taking a [full time] job because I have so many kids in schools I would have to pay for all their dinners and you know by the time you have paid out everything you have basically nothing left. It wasn't worth taking it and I found it better for myself having this job [part time cleaner]" (G F 31-40).*

No evidence was found amongst the TEIP sample of sustained involvement in the informal economy

No evidence of protracted work in the informal economy was found amongst the TEIP sample, and there was a perception by interviewees that working in the informal economy was heavily laden with risk, including the danger of loss of benefits and being prosecuted. When cash in hand work had been undertaken it was often as an alternative to claiming benefits in periods of lean economic activity and thus involved non-payment of tax (which would often equate to less than the benefits claimed) rather than

receipt of welfare payments:

*"I just pay my 105 pounds a month for my council tax and pay my bills and I'm doing it myself, I'm not getting any benefits. I think I know my way around.... but when you are on benefits you are under a lot stress all the time. You are trying to make that money last for one week to another. I just go to the boot sale 2-3 times a week you can pay the bills off, you are doing it yourself" (IT F 31-40).*

Help is needed for some people to move into the formal economy

There was a perception amongst a number of interviewees that Gypsy and Traveller community members needed greater assistance to assist them in regulating their economic activities so that they could move into the formal economy without falling foul of bureaucratic and regulatory requirements which might expose them to penalties. One community group outlined the nature of the support it provided to Gypsy and Traveller small trades people while highlighting the fears some community members had about moving from working in the informal economy to the formal economy:

*"We help them starting off. We show how to keep the books in order because at the end of the year when they come back to us to help to sort everything out if we can show how to do it before, it makes their and our job a lot easier. The majority of them are just terrified of going on the system in case the taxman comes and gets what they want and when everything you own is in your vehicle and in your caravan there is a big fear about what they might take off you. What we've been doing through word of mouth and through seminars is - we say 'look if you get yourself formal you've got more of a chance, they are taking off you anyway so let's get you sorted, let's get you in the system'. Even things what we take for granted you know like a bank account, National Insurance Card just general ID; a lot of Travellers just don't have it" (G M 31-40).*

Several interviewees suggested that a tax amnesty would help to increase the number of Gypsies and Travellers formalising their work practises. As is demonstrated by the above quote a strong fear exists that individuals operating in an 'irregular' manner will be penalised heavily for a history of working outside of 'the system' and thus lose what few

assets they have acquired.

Regrettably, the prospects of a tax amnesty being granted are unlikely owing to the complexities of the tax system.

The key state strategy for dealing with 'the informal economy' is enforcement when alternative approaches could potentially limit irregularities and encourage Gypsies and Travellers to engage with 'the system'

Over time, the tendency in policy terms has been for an emphasis on reduction of benefit fraud and tax evasion, which has been prioritised over approaches to tackling social exclusion (ODPM 2006). Anecdotal evidence suggests that a number of high profile raids on Traveller sites by the Inland Revenue have left some Gypsies and Travellers with the perception that the authorities are more interested in enforcement than support to reduce informal

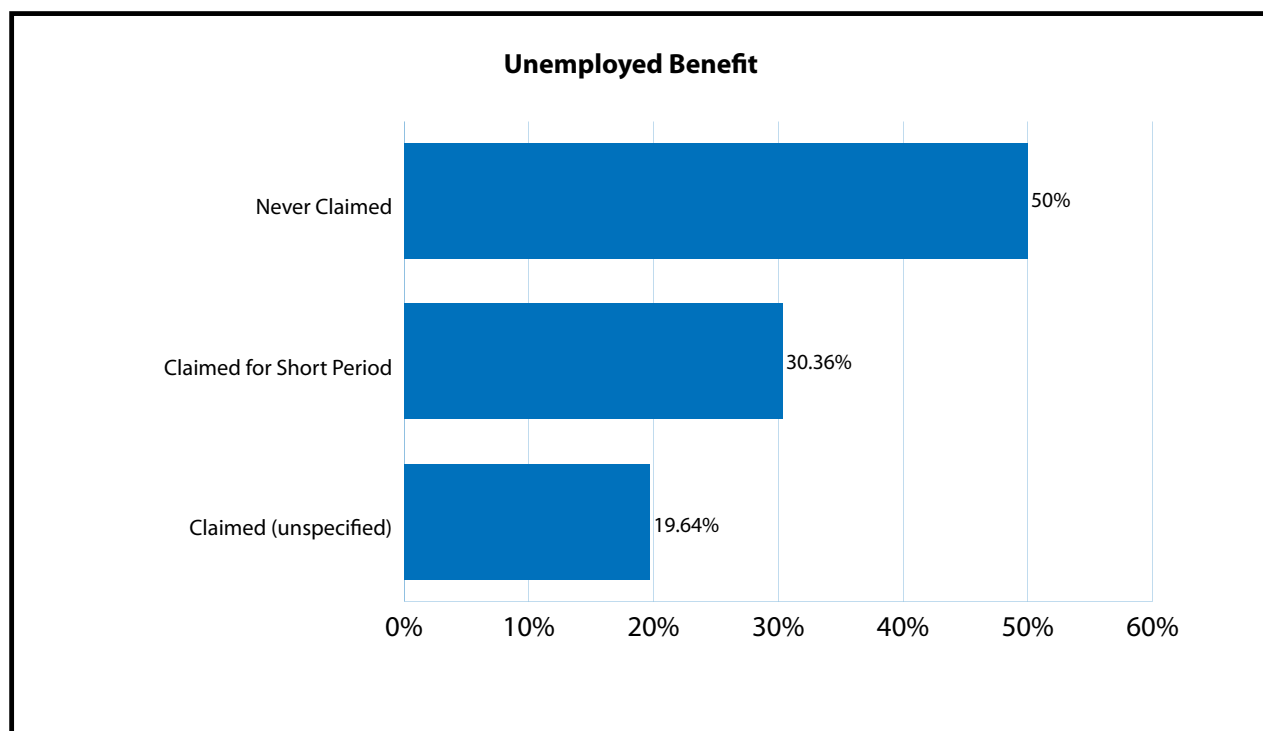
economic practices amongst members of the communities.

To date no targeted specifically tailored programme exists, designed to assist Gypsies and Travellers in conforming with more formal practices. Scope clearly exists for the Small Business Service; Neighbourhood Renewal Unit; DWP and Department of Trade and Industry to consider devising initiatives which include formalisation business support and start up packages for Gypsies and Travellers.

TEIP found resistance to welfare benefit take-up amongst Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

Although access to benefits focused specifically on 'unemployment' or Job Seekers Allowance rather than receipt of Income Support benefits payable to lone parents on low wages or who are unemployed; we found significant resistance to long-term take-up of benefits

**Table 14: Take-up of Unemployment Benefits amongst the TEIP sample**



\*.Diagram based on 65 percent response rate (56/86 Gypsies and Irish Travellers interviewed)

amongst our sample (who by definition are engaged in economic activities and thus not necessarily representative of Gypsy and Traveller communities as a whole given the increasing rates of welfare dependency).

Amongst the Gypsy and Irish Traveller sample 16 interviewees had received unemployment benefit for a short period (generally for a few months and less than a year) and a further 12 interviewees had accessed such benefits for an unspecified period. Twenty eight respondents indicated they had never been in receipt of unemployment benefits. For those interviewees who had claimed Benefits this had usually been utilised for a short time during periods of economic inactivity between seasonal work and generally for short periods. A number of interviewees reported that they had only claimed benefit once in their lives or were single parents with young children and thus were dependents on Benefits to survive. Contrary to popular stereotypes there seemed to be a strong level of resistance to accepting benefits which is regarded as a shameful inability to conform to the Gypsy/Traveller cultural virtues of independence:

*"No. Why should I? [take benefit] Because at the end of the day you take money that you shouldn't have to take when you can go out and look after yourself and earn your own living" (IT M 31-40)*

*"Never [signed on] it's not in our culture or ethics in our family, it's banned. I did waitressing and other jobs in the sixth form and at university even though some students signed on in the summer" (IT F 41-50).*

*"I never signed on, never had social. Years ago there was no such thing as social, no child benefit then either. I get 94 pounds a week but if I want to apply I can get more but I won't go cap in hand to anyone. If they owe me they can pay me" (G M 81-90).*

Rather than claim benefits when there was a down-turn in work, interviewees indicated that there would be an expectation of in-family kin group based support or assistance of the wider community to obtain temporary work, a significant benefit of membership of a group with strong bonding capital:

*"I paid my taxes like everyone else but there were times when I was out of work and had to do a bit of job creation and fruit picking. You had to" (G M 71-80).*

Negative views on receipt of welfare Benefits clearly led to some of the interviewees or their family members declining to take up benefits to which they were entitled, no doubt causing extra hardship for families on the economic margins. The TEIP findings mirror evidence obtained by the CRE, which reported that Gypsies and Travellers not taking up benefits as a result of cultural resistance as well as literacy difficulties which limited awareness of rights and the ability to complete application forms.

#### Decline of Traveller Economy leading to Welfare dependency

The decline in the Traveller Economy has in some locations been extreme and localised. In 2003 site managers reported that 'on seven out of ten' sites surveyed a minority of households were in work, in some cases, with less than ten per cent of residents actively involved in employment (Niner, 2003). For such Gypsies and Travellers access to benefits could be the only route through which they could afford to pay rental charges on pitch; thus creating a situation where receipt of Benefits could ironically offer a better financial option than casualised, low waged employment (see above for further discussion on the linkage between the benefits system, volunteering and low paid work). One interviewee explained how the availability of low waged employment could act as a deterrent to entry into work:

*"I didn't have no money that's one reason [signed on] and the other reason is ....if you're not signing on it's very hard to get a property for starters unless you rent it. It's very hard to get your own property, it's much easier if you are on the dole to get your own property and the other things like dental care. There's a lot of things that you'd have to pay for if you work. Sometimes that's what stops most of the people actually getting jobs because if they lose their dole they are losing their home, they're losing everything, everything that they've known all their life. It's going to be very hard for someone who thinks about working because by the time I get my wages I have to spend it on paying my way. I'm working for nothing" (IT F 21-30).*

One Traveller who lived on a local authority site gave some indication of the level of welfare dependency in localised spaces of acute social exclusion and the way in which such depths of poverty were leading to fragmentation of values of self-reliance and other ideals common to Gypsy and Traveller communities:

*"When I was growing up and was 15 I saw the young Traveller girls struggling on their 60 pound [benefit] and I thought I'm not having that. I think it's very hard going on the dole, you can't live like that. A lot of Travellers said to me 'You are posh to say that!' and I said 'How do you cope on 60 pound a fortnight? You can't cope on that.' I've never been on that" (IT F 21-30)*

#### Concerns exist about the suitability of Jobcentre support for Gypsies and Travellers

A number of interviewees were critical of support given to community members at the Jobcentre, reflecting evidence found elsewhere of dissatisfaction with support from employment services (CRE, 2004; Cemlyn et al., 2009 and reports from some GTANAs). One interviewee's comments (below) indicate that Gypsies and Travellers may not be clearly included as a priority group in Jobcentre priority groups and positive action measures leading to frustration:

*"A couple of times I've actually been into the Jobcentre when I was unemployed and they actually told me .....there was no help and support...one of the times I actually know they had a lot of funding [for minority and priority groups]. I actually went in there and I said I'd like help and support and I know about this and I wasn't being cocky about it and they said you don't fall into that criteria, [so I asked] 'Who does?' and then he explained it and then he said because obviously I'm at this age range because I'm white I'm not such and such and I found that very strange" (G M 21-30).*

Other interviewees were angered by the lack of cultural awareness demonstrated by Jobcentre Advisers, who for example suggested that they should not use their Traveller site address when making job applications:

*"I've applied for loads of jobs like cleaning and don't even get a response back and then you go to the Jobcentre advisors and they say 'Well use someone else's address!' Why should I? I'm proud of who I am. I think the site address is the main problem because they don't even give you the chance" (G F 31-40).*

Given the decline in the numbers employed in the traditional Traveller Economy and the increasing challenges they face, Jobcentres may play a greater role in helping Gypsies and Travellers seek greater economic inclusion

in the future. In its response to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance fourth periodic report on the UK (ECRI, 2010), the previous Government acknowledged the growing economic pressures that Gypsies and Travellers are facing, proposing that Jobcentre Plus, (the agency which helps people of working age into employment), can provide specialist support, in particular, recommending that Jobcentre advisors should 'forge strong links' and engage with local Gypsy and Traveller groups to assist community members into work.

The Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), discussing the increasing reliance on Jobcentre 'personal advisors' reported on the good intent behind the increase in such staff:

*"When boiled down, the traditional model of welfare involved little more than a Department for Social Security employee sat behind a desk, processing paperwork and handing job adverts and benefit payments to the unemployed. This impersonal and bureaucratic approach to supporting the unemployed was ineffective. In an attempt to rectify this, each job seeker is now allocated a Personal Adviser" (IPPR 2009)*

In practice however, the TEIP found evidence that Gypsy and Traveller clients have not always received useful and helpful advice from advisers (see above). The value of Jobcentre advisors depend to a great extent on the quality of the personal relationship which can be established between client and advisor as well as utilising knowledge and insight into a client's culture and experiences that an adviser can use in developing tailored support.

Research conducted for the DWP has shown respondents in general expressed almost overwhelmingly negative comments about their interactions with staff in Jobcentres during the period in which they did not have access to a Personal Adviser. Concerns ranged from lengthy queues in offices, to insufficient time for interaction with staff. (Bickerstaffe et al, 2009). Given the educational and skills profile of unemployed Gypsies and Travellers, this group is likely to be prominent amongst those who suffer from a lack of interaction with staff. Without considerable cultural awareness into the needs Gypsy and Traveller communities Jobcentre Advisors may prove equally ineffectual in assisting this population back into suitable work. We would therefore strongly



recommend that both ethnic monitoring of Gypsy and Traveller use of services (in common with data on other BME service users) and cultural awareness training for staff should be regarded as a priority

Jobcentre Plus views Gypsies and Travellers as a lifestyle choice and not an ethnic minority

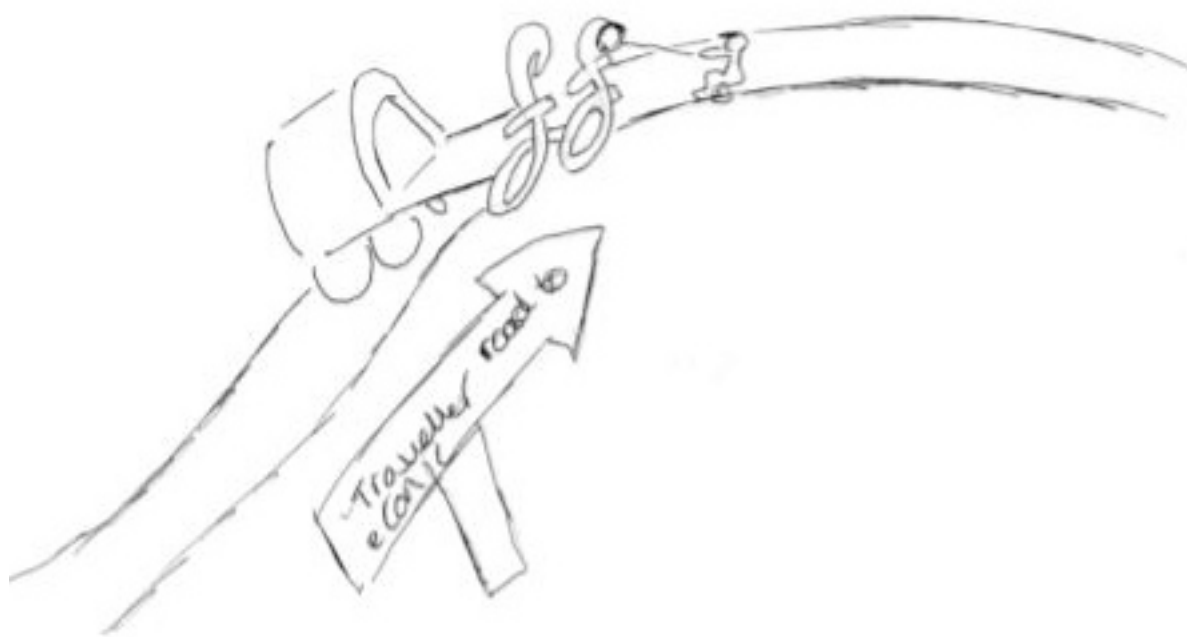
To the considerable disquiet of the TEIP, a DWP official with responsibility for working with disadvantaged groups (including Gypsies and Travellers) stated in response to a request for information that Jobcentre Plus does not collect data on the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers who use the service. The reason stated for this lack of administrative record keeping was that Gypsies and Travellers are distinguished by the lifestyle they have adopted (demonstrating a confusion between New Travellers who are not recognised as an ethnic group and 'ethnic' Gypsies and Travellers. The DWP argued that as any potential customer is free to adopt a travelling lifestyle, inclusion of a separate category in ethnic monitoring would mix information about ethnicity with information about lifestyle, thereby diminishing the value of the data (correspondence from DWP received 6/5/2010). This misunderstanding of the culture and identity of Gypsies and Travellers at the highest level indicates why many staff at Jobcentres are unable to provide appropriate advice in relation to supporting these minority groups and demonstrates the urgent need for training and guidance on these issues for DWP staff.

the prospects for progress and advancement are limited, a state of affairs that is not helped by the dearth of specialist short training courses and failing support structures in Jobcentres.

In practice, for many ambitious Gypsies and Travellers employment within specialist community sectors may offer the most effective way to enhance their career options and economic inclusion, and it is to the topic of the opportunities afforded by community work that we turn to in Chapter Six.

### **Reflection and Conclusion**

This chapter which has explored both ends of the economic inclusion spectrum from highly skilled and waged professionals to those working with low waged casualised employment indicates that the picture of Gypsy and Traveller economic inclusion is complex. On one hand there are clear indications of greater levels of entry into managerial positions, with such activities offering scope for emerging role models and community leaders to challenge exclusion and stereotypes. In contrast, limited educational achievement and participation amongst many community members may produce constraints on such trends and, combined with a decline in traditional Traveller working practices, lead to increasing numbers becoming dependent on low paid jobs where



# ***Chapter Six***

***Working for the Community***



## Chapter Six

### Working for the Community

#### Introduction

Ten years ago only a small number of community organisations working with Gypsies and Travellers were in a position to be able to employ staff. Nationally it was believed that only around five people were employed in third sector agencies to work with Gypsies and Travellers through community organisations, an extremely low number given the estimated 300,000 strong community (CRE, 2006). A decade ago none of these employed third sector staff were actually Gypsies and Travellers, although a number of community members were known to be employed in the public sector as site managers, Gypsy-Traveller liaison officers and classroom assistants working with Traveller Education Services. The exponential increase in Gypsy and Traveller related third sector posts has taken place in the past few years, and extremely positively, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of community members employed to undertake these jobs, as well as working as sessional workers or volunteers on specific projects.

Despite the increase in recent years in numbers of Gypsy and Traveller community groups there are still very few for the size of the population (when compared with other BME 'third sector' agencies)

In addition to the increase in size and number of national groups, within the last ten years there has also been a sharp rise in the number of smaller scale local community groups which have been set up by Gypsies and Travellers and which employ community members as paid staff. Despite this increase the relative overall number of third sector agencies remains extremely small in comparison to agencies operated by other ethnic minority groups. The Black Training & Enterprise Group (BTEG) undertook research into the The State of the Caribbean Voluntary and Community Sector in England (BTEG, 2009). The resulting report calculated that there are at least 850 Caribbean Voluntary and Community Sector groups (CVCOs) operating in England of which 80% of these groups provided services directly to their local community. Whilst the Caribbean community is approximately three times the size of the estimated Gypsy and Traveller population, it is of grave concern that the

National Equality Partnership review (NEP, 2008) found twenty one Gypsy and Traveller groups on the list of registered charities, a tiny figure when compared to the number of Caribbean and other ethnic minority agencies. Whilst it is probable that a considerable number of Gypsy and Traveller community groups are too small to be registered charities or lack incorporated legal and charitable status (agencies described by McCabe and Phillimore, 2010 as 'below the radar') and are thus outside the list of registered charities, clear disproportionality exists in terms of available services for these communities, an indicative sign of lack of 'mainstream' social capital. The importance of community groups to the development of ethnic minority economic inclusion is highlighted in the Black Manifesto (BM, 2010):

*"Black and Minority Ethnic Third Sector Organisations play an extremely important role in ensuring that the worst effects of socio-economic and racial disadvantage are alleviated in some of the poorest sections of British society. Driven by their social purpose they have sought to address failures in public policy and inefficiencies in the operations of markets. Local regeneration has been one of their primary goals seeking greater levels of equity which delivers additional benefits of greater levels of social cohesion and civic engagement" (BM, 2010: 22).*

Within the remainder of this chapter we explore the benefits to individual Gypsies and Travellers and their wider communities of working within such specialist community support agencies; present respondents' experiences of making the transition to such work and highlight transferable recruitment and support lessons that can be applied to other employment sectors.

#### Routes into Gypsy and Traveller 'community' employment

A small but growing number of Gypsies and Travellers are employed in the third sector

A key finding for the TEIP was the high number of Gypsy and Traveller interviewees who were working directly with their own communities, for example in Traveller Education (as teachers or teaching assistants); Gypsy-Traveller liaison roles or in Gypsy/Traveller site management posts. We have classified a range of employment types (in local authority, private sector and social enterprise organizations) as 'community'

employment where Gypsy and Traveller interviewees work directly with members of their own communities in specialised posts.

For interviewees in 'waged' employment (see Chapter 5) the largest single category consisted of respondents working in 'community roles' comprising (25 interviewees/28 percent) of the sample. Whilst a number of respondents were working in managerial/social entrepreneur positions, the majority of respondents in 'community' posts were classified as being in skilled waged employment. Seventeen respondents had entered into these community roles within the last five years and were employed primarily in outreach and community development demonstrating the rapid growth in this type of work in recent years. Six interviewees were engaged in the sector as volunteers or sessional workers employed on short term projects within third sector community groups.

**Female Gypsies and Travellers are more likely than men to work in third sector employment**

Approximately three quarters of the Gypsy and Traveller employees we interviewed in community posts were female, mirroring national trends which demonstrate that women are employed in community work in far greater numbers than are men (ONS, 2009). For Gypsies and Travellers the trend towards this type of employment also appears to reflect a growing political awareness and involvement in campaigning for Travellers' rights (Acton 1997, Greenfields and Home, 2007) which has been an explicit route into this field for a number of interviewees. One interviewee posited that the lower level of male engagement in this field is reflective of the fact that Traveller men preferred undertaking more 'traditional' masculine roles, and would find it difficult to fit into an office environment. Thus, such employment was more likely to be considered suitable for women:

*"Men are self-employed. I can't see many Traveller men working in an office but then again they never really got the chance to. I'm being old-fashioned when I say that but I just personally think I couldn't see my father come up here and working in an office as a Community Development Worker. It is alright for women because you're working for your own community. It is alright to work for your own community because it is still a question of trust. I don't know what their husbands would feel if they knew they*

*were working in pubs or for other communities and things. I don't think that would be allowed"* (IT F 21-30).

All of the female employees working in the community sector were literate although not all had completed school or gained formal qualifications. Interestingly, fifty percent of the waged community workers had returned to education after a gap in educational participation with the explicit intention of improving their literacy or gaining further qualifications. One of the interviewees recounted that although she had not been qualified to apply for a Traveller Education Service vacancy the organisation had given her encouragement and support on gaining further qualifications which eventually led to her employment in the sector.

*"...when I applied for the job that I'm doing now with the Traveller children I didn't get the job because I told them the truth that I didn't have a lot of education. The next interview I went to they said it would help if I agreed to go back and improve my literacy and numeracy skills so I went back to college. I did basic levels 1 and 2 in literacy and numeracy. I've made some lovely friends. I built up some confidence like at the beginning I was very shy and embarrassed of my age to go learning all this and plus I learnt a lot in the schools. The good thing is I met some lovely people and made friends, it gave me more confidence. I thought it would have been a lot harder but the only thing I regret is I wish I did it 20 years before that"* (IT F 41-50).

A number of respondents reported that most of their skills had been learnt in their new work environments, whilst working alongside colleagues from non-Gypsy/Traveller backgrounds. However, making the transition to office environments and engaging with organisational expectations of mainstream work cultures could at first be bewildering for some Gypsies and Travellers:

*"I'm respected here but the downside is not having had the education a lot people have got. A lot of them have been to college and university and their everyday way of speaking and jargon is a lot different to mine. Not all words but some I have difficulty with and have problems with myself thinking am I dumb, when I speak is it coming out like a broad accent or just uneducated and that bothered me for a while. Now my confidence is such that I say well that's the way I am and I speak*

*like I do and that's it. I speak from the heart not the hip, I am what I am" (G M 41-50).*

Even though tailored community services are directly related to meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers it can be seen that work environments could pose a cultural challenge for community members moving into this field of work. However, all the respondents interviewed in this sector had successfully transcended barriers to work and were thriving in this employment sector.

Personal experience of service use can be a trigger for third sector involvement

A major route into working in third sector community agencies had been experiences of engaging with mainstream services or facing circumstances where support had been required. A significant number of community workers reported that they had been involved in planning disputes relating to purchase of land and unauthorised developments (see further Chapter 8 on accommodation issues). These experiences had triggered a desire to share their acquired knowledge and assist other Gypsies and Travellers in similar circumstances:

*"We had nothing. Now there is such great help, but still there are a lot of Travellers out there who don't understand there is help out there for them. They don't understand that [Community Group] is here to help them, they don't understand that they can come up to [Community Group] and get them to do this and do that. Basically I want to help my own community get what they deserve. I want them to have proper accommodation, people like my parents, my grandparents and my own family. I'm not just helping my own family but there are many people... ..[that] have all these needs" (IT F 21-30).*

Third sector employment can lead to significant staff pressure.

Whilst enjoying their work and recognising the value of what they were doing, a number of respondents reported that working in a community role could lead to significant pressures on staff. Several respondents reported being approached outside of working hours for help and assistance on issues which were not in their work remit. In addition, others found it difficult to separate problems which occurred at work and the impacts on their clients from their own personal lives:

*"..if you don't take time off you get a bit burnt out so you've got to watch [out]. I'd like to have more time for myself because we are very family-orientated and I'm finding the whole thing that I'm doing very time consuming. I think the reason that is happening is that there is not enough good quality support services for Gypsy and Traveller people countrywide" (G F 41-50).*

Despite the pressures, when contrasted with their experiences of unpaid activism it was generally agreed that a structured work environment could lead to a better work/life balance than working on an independent basis. Some interviewees who had worked as unpaid activists in the past found that being a part of a professional team with a range of support roles and access to staff support, could significantly reduce the stress and anxiety they had experienced as activists:

*"It is exactly the same job that I was doing before but I am being paid for it. When I was doing it voluntarily I was running a home, looking after two children and some people knew my landline number so they called me at home all the time and I couldn't catch up with the things at home. I couldn't deal with the children and nobody supported me and it was too much to cope with. Then when I took on this job the manager said if somebody rings you up now about being evicted or the police have pulled them over you say "hang on a minute I'm going to give you a telephone number, this is the number of [community group] and we've got a case worker there that deals with things like this and you can ring her up" and instantly the pressure has gone. I have been told what my job is, I know what I have to deal with now. I've got a mobile phone, a work phone. This job just made me so much happier and I can prioritise things, I can plan my day and it makes my life a lot easier" (G F 31-40).*

Interviewees revealed that supporting fellow community members experiencing acute exclusion could also be frustrating. This was especially so when little immediate support and help could be delivered and there were restrictions (often related to pressure on resources) on how much support could be provided:

*"One of the 'downs' I think is that progress to take issues forward for Gypsies and Travellers is a hard slog. I think if I was doing it for homeless dogs or homeless kittens I would get a lot more help and support from the wider community and councils. When you say I'm working for Gypsies and*



*Travellers it's like a grey screen comes over their eyes and they immediately start backing away 'We'd like to but....' " (G F 41-50).*

An unexpected disadvantage for some interviewees was the perception of some Gypsies and Travellers that once they (the interviewee) became a paid worker they were no longer fully part of the community. Additionally, some respondents reported that, if they worked with mainstream services and acted as intermediaries, supporting families around service provision, they were personally blamed when third parties were deemed to have failed to deliver on promises:

*"When I started to work here there was talk going around and people saying 'Can we trust her?' or 'Is she a kind of like a 'country person', a settled person. Is she going to be like them?' or 'Can we say this to her?' .... For a long time I was trying to work out my way to prove to them that because I'm working here it does not mean I'm not one of 'them'. The other side of it is when I used to introduce people to the site where they were doing something if they didn't do what they were telling people, they said things to my mum and it comes back on me... it would come back as a family thing". (IT F 21-30)*

Some respondents noted that working in institutions such as schools or community groups could lead to peer group pressure to conform to perceived accepted group behaviours rather than adhering to institutionally expected roles and values. In addition, some forms of employment (for example health or social care work) was deemed to fall outside of traditional cultural expectations creating significant pressures and at times gossip if (for example) someone was not behaving in a way considered appropriate to their gender or age (Greenfields, 2008). For staff working for, or involved with institutions which did not always have the trust of the community (e.g. local authorities) complex social negotiations and self-doubts could arise over whether to remain working in such jobs or whether an individual should distance themselves residentially from the community rather than be seen as a representative of an external (and at times hostile) agency:

*"I moved off a site because I didn't want to live on a site. I didn't want the hassle [of] when you are doing a job. I worked at special needs in a school. It was OK but when I was going to school I*

*had the challenging from my peers as well as the challenging at school. I had school kids go on to me saying 'You are a Gypsy.' and then I had the challenging from my peers 'You are not a Traveller if you can read and write. You are not a Traveller if you are going to work in school' " (G F 31-40).*

Being a community member is an asset when working in the third sector with Gypsies and Travellers

In contrast to the difficulties and frustrations which could occur for staff members making the transition to working alongside mainstream services, a large number of interviewees believed that being of the community meant that they were trusted by their client group. Community workers repeatedly stated that their shared experiences helped them to understand the needs of their client group, as well as giving them an ability to effectively communicate with their clients. The trust of members of the community was frequently cited as an important factor that assisted staff in delivering effective support and tailored projects. Rostas (2010) writing of Roma projects in Europe made the point that when trust is lacking this is a major factor leading to projects failing to effectively engage with and mobilise the community as a whole,, a factor recognized by the TEIP interviewees:

*"The biggest skill of all is being a Traveller, because it automatically shows trust from another Traveller to a Traveller. The other thing is you can understand their needs and sometimes you just make a decision of your own back because you know the circumstances of the other Travellers. Being a Traveller you know what Travellers want, so you've got to have good communication skills and trust skills and you've got to be able to take your own initiative sometime" (IT F 21-30)*

Positive action can be important in recruiting to community posts

Many of the community workers the TEIP interviewed had been employed under 'positive action' principles where uncertificated skills are considered and a good knowledge of the community is defined as an essential factor to be taken into account throughout the short-listing and selection process (See Chapter One for further discussion). As considered earlier, positive action is distinct from positive discrimination as it does allow people with skills but who do not necessarily have paper

qualifications the opportunity to compete for work on an equal footing, but does not involve tokenism or quotas or staff being employed solely because of their ethnicity. One interviewee actively opposed the concept of both positive action and positive discrimination on pragmatic grounds, identifying that such an approach was counterproductive to attaining equality and could diminish community cohesion:

*"I think if you start making it 'Traveller only' you start making it elitist and as soon as you start making it elitist in my mind you've lost the battle. One of the biggest things we're fighting for is equality, and you can't have equality if you don't include a lot of people. I'm a Gypsy man myself and I'd love nothing better than to employ a load of Travellers, but common sense says that's not right because as soon as you start employing just Travellers there's loads of qualified people out there who can't find work and who would say 'everything is going towards the Gypsies' or 'the Gypsies are getting special treatment'. So if we treat everybody equal it helps to ease community tensions" (G M 31-40).*

In contrast, in some cases interviewees expressed resentment that their membership of the community was not more widely appreciated by employers:

*"A job came up, an Assistant Gypsy Liaison Officer and the only time I had problems with getting a job was with the very job I thought I would have got. But I didn't even get an interview, and basically, I was told that I didn't get the job because I didn't have the qualifications to work in the field of Gypsies. I just couldn't believe it because I would have had more qualifications than anybody else because I don't read about Gypsies in books, I've experienced it" (G F 31-40).*

#### Positive action works in terms of practical outcomes and achieving economic inclusion

One interviewee recounted the ways in which her employer, (a local authority), had been flexible on the question of qualifications and had promised to provide support and training when she was in post:

*"We were going to be evicted and needed a place to go. I met [council official] to see if he could help. [The council official] invited me to take part in a 'myth busting report' [about Gypsy and Traveller issues] they were preparing. A week later I was*

*asked if I would like to work on Gypsy and Traveller issues and I said to them 'I have no qualifications, I can't work a computer, I've only just learnt how to use a mobile phone'.*

*They said though they would train me. At the time I was sceptical but said I would think about it. They told me the job was engaging with the community and helping with form filling and outreach work. My confidence was low because of the eviction but a family member persuaded me. I thought 'well I haven't had enough training or education, I've never been the best speller or writer, I only know about the work I've done like scrap, I didn't think I would be capable'" (G F 41-50).*

With the support of her employers and access to training this interviewee has developed into a highly respected and effective local authority employee.

#### Community groups are important in tackling social exclusion

In the introduction we identified that important opportunities to positively affect both the employment rates of community members and the delivery of services are being missed as a result of the paucity of Gypsy and Traveller community sector agencies. Whilst there is still significant room for improvement and development of the sector, in recognition of the capabilities and need within Gypsy and Traveller communities, work is being undertaken to develop and support localised capacity building by a small group of core agencies such as The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, Travellers Aid Trust, The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain and the Northern Network of Travelling People. For a more in-depth discussion on good practice recommendations for community groups see Chapter 11.

#### Conclusion

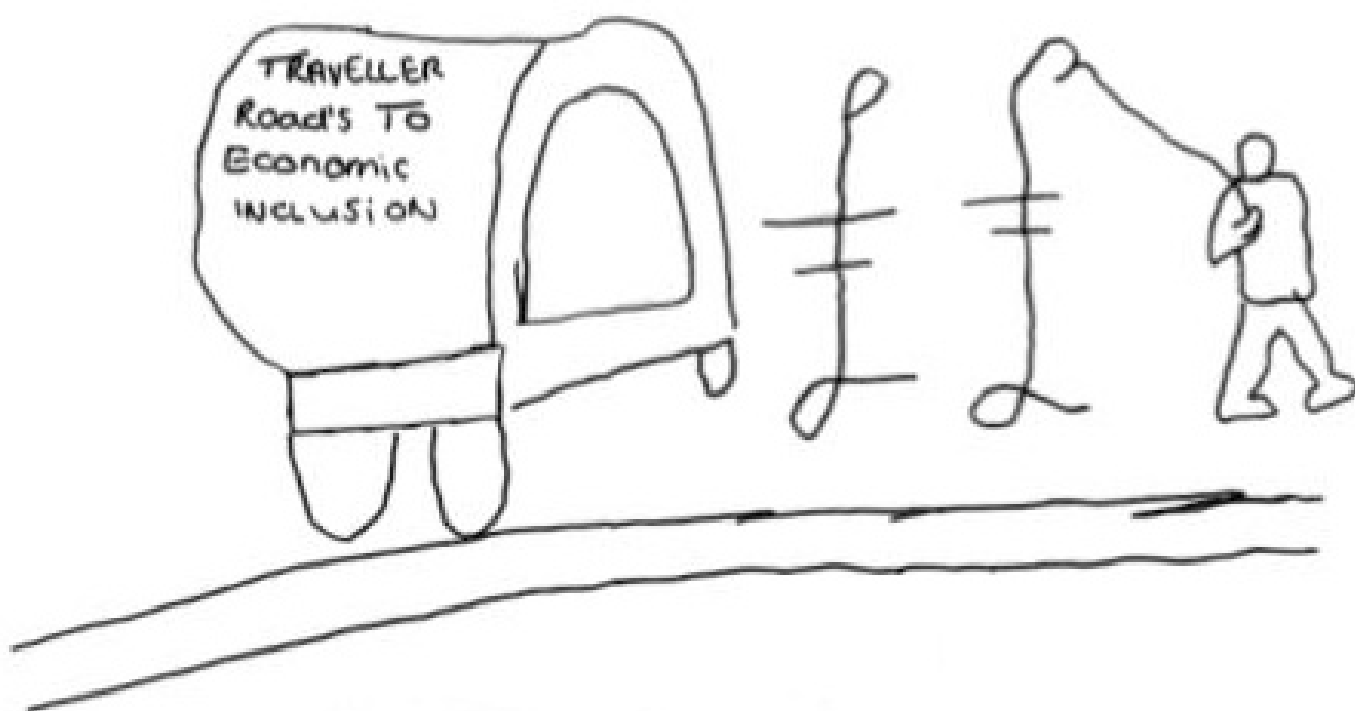
The experiences recounted within this chapter reveal the huge challenges facing community members who are employed in the third sector. These challenges revolve around balancing competing community expectations, ensuring that trust is retained and attempting to ensure an appropriate work/social life balance as well as needing to develop new skills sets whilst in post, often whilst unable to access appropriate formalised support and training. Given the rapid growth in community employment it may be

prudent for community groups to develop ways of sharing experiences and build common formal support structures and training packages which are culturally specific to the needs and challenges facing this group of staff.

Involvement in community groups and working in targeted services hold the potential for community activists and workers to achieve important positions in decision making arenas as well as accessing platforms to effectively mediate between policy makers and the community. A number of well-respected individuals exist who have managed to achieve this complex balancing act i.e. Peter Mercer MBE who formerly worked as a Gypsy Liaison Officer, Siobhan Spencer MBE who coordinates the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group and Janie Codona a former project worker for the Ormiston Trust and Commission for Racial Equality commissioner, who is now employed by the community led agency 'One Voice for Travellers.' All these individuals are acknowledged community role models and champions. Another notable actor within third sector community groups was the late Charles Smith who had chaired the Gypsy Council until his death. One interviewee noted:

*"I worked a lot with Charles Smith. I knew Charles Smith for many years and worked with him in the Gypsy Council and he put his heart and soul into representing the Gypsy Council. It was a hard task and one with responsibility and Charles met that and was an outstanding man with plenty of integrity and stood for the truth. Charles was a Councillor, Mayor and CRE commissioner. He took on the responsibilities and upheld them to the end. It shows what you can achieve if you step out and try and achieve something" (G M 71-80).*





# ***Chapter Seven***

***Roma and New Travellers***

## Chapter Seven

### Roma and New Travellers

#### Introduction

In this chapter we turn to the experiences of New Traveller and Roma interviewees who participated in the TEIP. As explained in Chapter One the project has focused on the experiences of Gypsies and Irish Travellers in the UK because they are the largest Gypsy and Traveller groups. However, as a result of a commitment to inclusivity a small number of Roma and New Traveller interviewees were included in the sample with the intent of examining the ways in which their experiences of economic inclusion converge and diverge with those of Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

Given the diversely different origins of New Travellers and Roma and the extremely limited research into the culture, employment and economic inclusion of members of the groups resident in Britain we have elected to discuss

the two groups separately within a single chapter, through presenting both a summary of background research into these communities and considering the interview data gathered from the small sub-sample of community members.

#### Roma Economic Inclusion

Four Roma participants took part in the TEIP, two male and two female. Within this section we refer to their countries of origin as well as their accommodation status and educational attainment, regarding all of these factors as central to understanding their narratives. The latter two topics are considered in depth (within separate chapters) for the larger groups who participated in the project (Gypsies and Irish Travellers). No attempt is made to claim that these interviewees are representative of their community resident in Britain, but their narratives are explored to provide a template for consideration of economic inclusion strategies for Roma in the UK.

**Table 15 Roma Interviewees in the TEIP**

Age and Gender	Type of Employment	Level of Education	Type of Accommodation	Country of Origin
Male 51-60	Teacher	University	Rented (Housed)	Belorussia
Male 31-40	Outreach Worker	Secondary School	Rented (Housed)	Slovak Republic
Female 21-30	Outreach Worker	Secondary School	Rented (Housed)	Slovak Republic
Female 21-30	Kitchen Worker	Primary School	Rented (Housed)	Czech Republic

Of the four Roma community members interviewed three were employed as specialist community workers and the fourth was employed as a kitchen worker. An additional (booster) interview was carried out with a non Roma respondent employed at management level within a Roma Support Group. The TEIP team feel that the inclusion of these interviewees into the wider sample and a consideration of the broad community roles they perform provides a range of insights into how best to support the Roma community.

### **Background Research into Roma in Britain**

To frame the findings on Roma's access to employment we have summarised the two key research reports (University of West Scotland (2008) 'Report on the Situation of the Roma Community in Govanhill, Glasgow' and European Dialogue (2009) 'Mapping Survey of A2 and A8 Roma in England') containing data on Roma experiences of settlement in Britain. Attention is paid to the findings within these reports pertaining to economic inclusion and contrasted with findings from the TEIP study.

The Roma are believed to have identical origins to British Romany Gypsies in that they are the descendants of migrants from India who left the subcontinent approximately 1000 years ago (Fraser, 1992:20) and migrated through the Middle East and Europe absorbing the traditions and languages of host countries and fusing them with their own culture during their journeys (Stewart, 1997). In common with Romany Gypsies (and indeed Irish Travellers) Roma operate within close-knit kin networks in which tradition and gender roles have been important determinants of group dynamics. Amongst younger generations of Roma there is some evidence of acculturation and adaptation to residence in 'post-modern' societies although this is relatively limited within many Roma communities, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. The nomadic tradition amongst Roma is significantly less pronounced than amongst English Gypsies as a result of historically severe policies of assimilation (Stewart, 1997) and the decimation of the Roma population during the Second World War (Kenrick, 2006).

As is well evidenced, Roma across Europe experience the lowest standards of living and educational attainment and greatest

rates of discrimination of any population in Europe (ERRC, 2009). In common with other 'ethnic' groups considered within this report Roma have a strong tradition of trading and entrepreneurialism, although such independent economic activities were largely repressed in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries under communist regimes' employment policies which sought to 'proletarianise' the Roma by compelling them to take up (often low grade) industrial employment (Sigona and Trehan, 2010). After the collapse of the communist system in CEE countries the Roma were the group most affected by economic and structural changes as countries in the region moved towards becoming market economies, a process which most adversely affected state controlled manufacturing and heavy industry where they had been employed. In some areas in CEE Roma unemployment is five or six times the national average (ERRC, 2009, 5). High levels of worklessness and associated exclusion have been further compounded by poor accommodation and access to services due to racial and economic segregation (Sigona and Trehan, 2010), most markedly within the education system where many Roma have been wrongly classified as in need of 'remedial' teaching and placed in separate and inferior learning environments, predominantly in all Roma schools (ERRC, 2008).

Experiences of acute exclusion, combined with an increase in the activity of the far right in Central/Eastern Europe, has led to a marked decline in the circumstances of Roma. Racist attacks on these communities have increased dramatically across CEE countries (for example eight Roma were murdered in racist attacks in Hungary in 2009, ERRC, 2009: 17), prompting many Roma to seek a better life in Western Europe, Canada and America.

Roma who have settled in the UK are primarily A8 and A2 migrants. Roma migrants from A8 accession countries (admitted to the EU in 2004) are predominantly from Poland and the Czech Republic. A2 countries (which became part of the EU in 2008) include Romania and Bulgaria from where more recent British Roma migrants have originated.

Research by European Dialogue (2009) has found that a desire to find employment which is often impossible to access in their home countries, has been the strongest motivating factor for migrant Roma (cited by 59% of their

sample) whilst a further 37% reported moving to the UK to seek a better life for their children or to escape discrimination at home. Inadequate ethnic monitoring of Roma in the UK means that no clear evidence exists on the size of the community in Britain although European Dialogue (2009), noted estimates by interviewees that there was a Roma migrant population of 100,000 to 1,000,000 in the UK, most of whom have arrived since the collapse of the communist bloc in Central/Eastern Europe. This figure is based on highly anecdotal evidence so needs to be treated with caution. The report further noted that local authorities are reluctant to include Roma in ethnic monitoring categories adding to the difficulties in ascertaining a true picture of the population size (European Dialogue, 2009).

### **Roma Exclusion in the UK**

Access to employment and the resultant economic inclusion of Roma adults in Britain is frequently limited by the low standard of training and educational skills of members of this community. The difficulties Roma face in competing in the employment market is a direct legacy of exclusion in CEE countries where they typically attended segregated educational establishments and received limited or no schooling. A lack of qualifications and in some cases illiteracy combined with an often weak grasp of English means that many Roma can only find low skilled and poorly waged employment.

The Roma that were interviewed on behalf of the TEIP were in contrast relatively well educated. One respondent had undertaken higher education (making him one of the best qualified interviewees within the TEIP) and a further two had completed secondary education. These high levels of education enabled interviewees to secure work within the community sector. Only one of the Roma interviewees was working in the unskilled sector and she had received little formal education. It is likely (based upon existing evidence in the research reports cited above) that the profile of this interviewee is likely to be typical of Roma in Britain, leading (in common with many Gypsies and Irish Travellers) to employment within low paid, relatively low skilled jobs. Where language skills are a factor in the ability to access employment, a situation may occur where Roma seeking employment in situations where their 'home' language is spoken (for example Polish or Czech) may find themselves excluded

from opportunities by other nationals from their home country who are prejudice against Roma, or confined to types of work where poor working conditions prevail.

Since 2004 Roma from A8 countries have been legally able to work in Britain and are (in common with other EU migrants) entitled to basic social assistance e.g. housing benefit, council tax benefit and tax credit after twelve months of employment in the UK (European Dialogue, 2009: 23). However, A2 migrants face greater restrictions and unless self-employed can only work in Britain if they obtain a 'worker accession card' or if aged 18 to 30 under the Sector Based Scheme (SBS) which allows employers to recruit a limited number of low skilled workers for industries such as food manufacturing (European Dialogue, 2009, 24). These restrictions on employment have forced some Bulgarian and Romanian Roma into the informal economy and or illegal activities (European Dialogue, 2009, 9) which has led to hostile media reporting on the 'criminality' of Roma migrants in a manner similar to that discussed within Chapter 5 when considering Gypsies and Travellers.

There is a general consensus of opinion in research studies (European Dialogue, 2009; Poole and Adamson, 2008) that Roma are concentrated in low waged menial work and are frequently exploited by unscrupulous private employment agencies who specialise in obtaining work for migrant workers. European Dialogue, discussing the poor terms and conditions endured by Roma workers noted:

*"...where employment laws had actually been broken and serious exploitation had been taking place, the Roma workers at issue were reluctant to make an official complaint because they felt they would risk losing their jobs. In addition, it was believed that those who were prepared to complain tended to be uncertain of how to do so due to language difficulties, fear of further victimisation and the scarcity of advice centres, designated rights advisors or staff familiar with Roma issues" (European Dialogue, 2009, 87).* One TEIP interviewee advised us that private 'agencies' offered an important source of employment for Roma who were able to obtain cleaning contracts or similar work as family groups. However, it was claimed that since the recession began such work was harder to obtain, often because such agencies were often staffed by Central/East Europeans who had retained the prejudices against Roma

common in their countries of origin. Thus, some agencies gave preferential treatment to non Roma or were reluctant to employ Roma staff. Reliance on 'agency' work is exacerbated by employment restrictions which mean that many Roma migrants cannot access Jobcentre support (Poole and Adamson, 2008, 32). For those entitled to Jobcentre assistance European Dialogue found evidence that Roma in some cases received limited help, mirroring the findings pertaining to Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

*"Many Roma interviewees commented that they had experienced problems using Job Centre services, partly because of language difficulties, but mostly because they found the system too complicated, the staff unhelpful; also they reported that advisors were not always clear about the status of A2 and A8 citizens" (European Dialogue, 2009, 62).*

Poor English language and work skills and restricted access to training combined with the demands of supporting an often large family whilst having limited access to benefits, means that for older Roma there were few opportunities to develop a career, move to higher skilled work or increase their income levels. One Roma interviewee informed TEIP

*"There is a good chance to change things, people who are 35 plus can't change but the kids can, they have had education here, those born in communism with 4 or 5 children its difficult for them to go to college, you need heating and light, a home and work and only then maybe can you think about getting some education".*

Roma TEIP interviewees reported that some community members have little option but to generate income through working in the informal economy or on a casual basis, for example, selling the Big Issue, cleaning car windows at traffic lights, selling flowers from traffic islands or busking. Some of these vulnerable Roma migrants are at the mercy of unscrupulous gang masters who pay well below the minimum wage and also require their workers to rent substandard accommodation from them (Poole and Adamson, 2008: 36); a plight common to migrant workers from many countries (see further Craig, et, al., 2007).

Roma who are trapped in a cycle of disadvantage often live in severely overcrowded

accommodation with a number of families occupying housing designed for just one family. The London Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment found evidence of chronic overcrowding amongst Roma residing in houses in multiple occupancy homes, and that some such migrants were reduced to living in cars (Fordhams, 2008: 73). The Govanhill study estimated a Roma community of 2-3000 individuals concentrated in 4-5 streets (Poole and Adamson, 2008, 14) at an accommodation density far above legal levels. Where high density of migrant populations exist and thus Roma are more 'visible' there is a significant danger of becoming victims of racist abuse or violence such as occurred in Belfast in 2009 (Reuters, 2009). Even when living in less concentrated numbers and accordingly being less identifiable as Roma, many community members reported being hesitant about revealing their ethnicity as they are aware of the high level of racist hatred of their community and the possible dangers of being identified as a Roma. One interviewee (who worked in a support project) told the TEIP:

*"In work people know I am Roma but on the housing estate I say I am Slovak. I have a wife and child and have to be careful because some people only see the bad side of Roma, I have to know people personally before I tell them what I am. It's not that I am ashamed"*

The younger Roma generation face a different set of challenges to that of their elders. Many young Roma have spent their formative years in Britain, have been educated here and are accustomed to the English language and traditions. Accordingly they are better placed to integrate into UK society and become more economically included. One Roma interviewee stated:

*"My sister and brother they are in high school and they are doing very well, better than me. My brother wants to be a police officer. They are 13 and 15 and because they started the primary school here [they are finding it easier] it was harder for me because I came here at year 11 and spoke no English"*

Despite their apparently easier access to social capital, many younger Roma experience significant hardship not least because adjustment to British norms, and associated acculturation can bring them into conflict with the traditions and values of older community

members.

A report by the Children's Society (Ureche et al., 2009) found evidence that not all young Roma are attending school. Participation in even primary school may for some families be such a departure from family traditions as to be regarded as unacceptable. Other barriers to education (similar to those identified by Gypsy and Traveller interviewees) consist of fear of (or actual) bullying leading to removal from school. Bullying in school is often inflamed by negative media publicity (Ureche et al, 2009). Lurid reporting on the Roma in Britain has often created a set of stereotypes and misconceptions in a manner identical to that which has beset Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities for generations (see Richardson, 2006; Cemlyn et. al., 2009). Roma respondents to the TEIP stated that in employment, educational and school settings, as well as in engagements with the wider community, Roma did not always reveal their ethnicity and were often assumed by classmates or neighbours to be from CEE countries as opposed to also being Roma. Experiences of prejudice and fear of revealing one's identity has been found by the TEIP to affect all 'ethnic' groups we interviewed, leading to corrosive self doubt and anxiety as well as fear of employment related discrimination. Several interviewees commented that increasing levels of anti-Roma prejudice in Britain and fear that events taking place across Europe will be replicated here, are seriously impacting on the life chances of younger Roma, with the associated problems (e.g. unemployment; depression; anxiety and early school leaving) compounded by poor access to services and a paucity of targeted and flexible support for members of this community.

### **Good Practice in Economic and Social Support for Roma**

Although currently only a small number of targeted projects exist in the UK to support Roma, valuable good practice insights can be gained from these projects:

The Roma Support Group (RSG) set up in 1998, is one such good practice model. At first support was delivered by volunteers, informally, in a soup kitchen in Kings Cross. The organisation is now a constituted charity with a staff of 13 full, part time and sessional workers. Most of the RSG's work is focused on East and

West London, in particular the London borough of Newham. However, the organization also has a pan- London outreach providing guidance and support to a wide range of agencies working with Roma across London.

The RSG has a Trustees committee of which fifty percent are Roma. The Committee is chaired by a community member. The RSG is thus building on capacity within the community through providing members with experience of governance but also wider volunteering opportunities which has led to Roma becoming employed on a fulltime or sessional basis within the organisation. The RSG employs a number of Roma staff and believes that such staff are important community role models. The employment of Roma staff also informs the organisation's policy and practice and enhances communication with the wider Roma community. In addition some non Roma staff are employed by the agency as it is believed that a good ethnic mix strengthens the organisation by ensuring that intercultural learning in relation to different cultural outlooks and practices can take place.

The primary function of the RSG is to act as a frontline service provider offering advice and advocacy. This primary function drives the organisation, informs policy through enabling up to date understanding of community needs and the development of appropriate services. At the time of writing the Roma Support Group was supporting 900 Roma families which, given an average family size of six, equates to approximately five thousand individuals.

Key economic inclusion areas supported by the RSG include the provision of advice on setting up businesses; dealing with the bureaucracy of self-employment and becoming waged, for example by providing advice on completion of tax returns; actions which can be challenging for adults with limited education, literacy and language skills. The organisation also offers 'English as a Foreign Language' training to Roma adults, recognising that poor language and literacy skills in English are a major impediment to economic inclusion. The RSG has identified (in common with Gypsy and Traveller organisations) that such targeted support is more effective than recommending take up of mainstream support and services as their Roma clients are often apprehensive about dealing with services which are assumed to be hostile or which have in the past, failed to understand



their needs.

In addition to the services outlined above, the RSG has developed a number of cultural projects which are organised and run by sessional Roma staff. For example, Roma music is taught in the traditional way through practice and group learning and young people are introduced to professionals in the music industry in order to learn about the career options that music can offer. Workshops (for example on karate) are offered with the intention of building confidence amongst young Roma and attendance at such workshops is helping to improve school attendance, a goal which the RSG further facilitates through employing a Roma Education Officer who liaises with schools, Traveller Education Services and families.

Part of the youth work carried out by the RSG involves engaging with young Roma in creating and staging cultural materials and events to promote and strengthen community pride. The organisation believes that such activities are an important means by which the community can challenge prejudices as well as building confidence and enhancing understanding of Roma culture amongst the wider population. The cultural dimension of the RSG's service contains an intercultural dimension through promoting dialogue between the Roma and host society with the intent of bringing about increased understanding and change (see further Chapter Two for a fuller discussion on intercultural practice).

Examples of the work undertaken by the Roma Support Group in supporting young Roma are demonstrated in the following case studies from their records.

## Case Studies

### *Case Study 1*

Female Roma pupil experiencing difficulties in school. She was excluded from mainstream education and placed in special educational classes. She had a keen interest in poetry through participation in RSG cultural projects and was supported and encouraged to re-enter post 16 education. She has since made the transition to university.

### *Case Study 2*

A female Roma who enjoyed playing football (contrary to gendered expectations) participated in RSG organised football tournaments where she was talent spotted by a major London football team. She was tutored to become captain of their women's football team and was subsequently offered a place to undertake a sports studies degree at a university.

### *Case Study 3*

A young Roma male who had achieved well at school was able to access home visit support from the RSG and was encouraged to engage in poetry and cultural studies workshops. After becoming involved in crime and being sentenced to a youth offending institute he was supported by the RSG and obtained early release as a result of good behaviour and on condition he entered into further education. He has subsequently successfully engaged with a higher education course in business studies.

The case study examples demonstrate the types of problems faced by excluded young Roma. The support of the RSG has been effective in assisting them to overcome social exclusion and achieve success. Challenges experienced by these young people at times could relate to culture clashes with older generations, as for example, the young woman footballer was subject to peer and cultural pressure over her decision to play football; wear shorts whilst playing, rather than 'culturally appropriate' clothing and that she wished to study rather than engage in expected gendered behaviours (typically associated with early marriage and domestic responsibilities). Her success has however led to her being accepted as a community role model by some Roma, who are proud of her achievements. Thus, community

groups can act as catalysts for community change. Facilitating such cultural adaptation is part of the intercultural dialogue and change desired by community groups of this type.

Despite the rapidly growing size of the British Roma community there remains a lack of specialist community groups (European Dialogue, 2009: 43)

despite the evident social value of such agencies. Targeted economic inclusion activities undertaken by the few Roma groups include a drop in centre at Govanhill which provides targeted support in accessing services, including employment and training, and also offers liaison between schools and Roma families (Poole and Adamson, 2008: 14). As part of a drive to enhance educational inclusion a number of Traveller Education Service (TES) projects work with Roma although it is reported that educational staff often feel that they are working in isolation and carrying out activities which other agencies should be addressing (European Dialogue, 2009: 96). TES in areas such as Waltham Forest and Leeds Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service (GRTAS) are amongst a number of statutory agencies undertaking innovative targeted work with young Roma.

As part of the TEIP study of good practice initiatives (see further Chapter Eleven) the TEIP interviewed Roma employees of the Leeds GRTAS. One (Roma) staff member indicated the importance of their work:

*"What I really like is that I can help Roma people... What makes me happy is that when I first came here there was no one to help us [nothing] like this service and I didn't speak English and neither did my parents, so we started from nothing. But now we can help Roma at the start". A Roma co-worker added "... to do this work you have to be born Roma, you cannot really acquire the skills of understanding unless you have worked with and known the community for a long time"*

In common with good practice discussed in earlier chapters these Roma staff were recruited through the use of 'positive action' criteria which identified knowledge of the community and an ability to effectively communicate as essential skills; enabling other more formal skills to be developed once they were in post through supporting them in accessing specialist training.

It is reported that over the past two years

there has been an increase in support service employment opportunities for Roma as local authorities realise the added value of employing community members in community outreach roles. In the light of the Government spending review and national cutbacks in public sector services there are fears that this trend will be reversed leading to an erosion of specialist support for members of this community (see further Waltham Forest Guardian, 8th October, 2010).

Any rollback of services are likely to have significant consequences for these economically and socially excluded groups, as despite the presence of fairly large Roma communities in many areas, it remains the case that most local authorities have failed to address their needs through targeted support, compounding their multiple exclusions. It has been suggested that local authorities failure to engage with Roma populations may equate to a breach of statutory equalities obligations under the Equality Act, 2010 and the Race Relations Acts. Problems with encouraging local authorities and other statutory bodies to engage with Roma are compounded by the systemic failure of statutory bodies to collect data or undertake ethnic monitoring in relation to Roma, Gypsies and Travellers. This problem is compounded by low levels of self ascription by these communities through fear or racism and suspicion of ethnic monitoring mechanisms.

### **The Future of Roma Engagement**

In the past the needs and aspirations of Roma have not always featured in the campaign and lobbying strategies of Gypsy and Traveller groups, in part because most campaigning has focused on the pressing need to address the shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites, a campaign objective not of direct relevance to Roma. More recently an increasing awareness of the synergies of social exclusion experienced by Roma, Gypsies and Travellers and the increasing visibility of Roma in policy debate has led to the reframing of the focus of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Traveller Law Reform (formed in 2002) to look at broader issues of social exclusion experienced by the communities. The APPG, now called the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies Roma and Travellers, will in the future offer greater scope to develop campaigning and support initiatives in economic and social inclusion that are of benefit to Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

### **New Travellers: Background**

New Travellers (a media imposed label for a group or community who typically prefer to be known simply as 'Travellers' (see further Home and Greenfields, 2006) are not a distinct ethnic group but a loose-knit community of people predominantly from the White British/Irish majority populations who may have grown up in conventional accommodation but who (as members of a cultural movement) have lived 'on the road' for a considerable period of time. Greenfields (1999) found evidence that some people with Gypsy and Traveller ancestry had consciously elected to return to the nomadic traditions of their forebears after meeting New Travellers whilst attending music events.

Although in popular discourse associated with the 'alternative' and 'festival movements' which arose in the 1970s (Earle, et. al., 1994; Hetherington, 2000) the numbers of New Travellers (whose identifying name was drawn from the economic-cultural practice of leading

a nomadic life in converted vehicles such as buses; trucks; or utilizing more 'traditional' Gypsy/Traveller accommodation such as caravans, horse-drawn wagons or bender tents for individuals who have consciously adopted a 'greener' Gypsy/Traveller identified way of life) increased dramatically within the 1980s as a result of the deep recession and deindustrialization. At that time there was a sharp shift in the demographics of New Traveller communities with an increasing percentage of community members coming to be individuals who had left care or the armed forces and who often lacked social capital in the external world although frequently possessing essential practical skills (Earle, et. al., 1994; Lowe & Shaw, 1993) or simply young people who were unable to find employment or who had become homeless as a result of job loss (Greenfields, 1999; Webster & Millar, 2001). For some people who were at risk of social exclusion during the major recessions of the 1980s-1990s opting to become nomadic was identified as a 'more positive form of homelessness' (Webster 1999;

**Table 16 – New Traveller interviewees – accommodation, employment and educational status**

<b>Age and Gender</b>	<b>Type of Employment</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Type of Accommodation</b>
Male 41-50	Car Mechanic/ Agricultural Worker	Secondary School/ Vocational Training	Unauthorised Encampment
Male 41-50	Training/Hand- crafts/Cooking/ Seasonal Festival Work	Secondary School	Unauthorised Development
Female 31-40	Community Worker	University	House (Rented)
Female 31-40	Community Worker	University	Unauthorised Encampment
Female 31-40	Community Worker	University	Unauthorised Encampment

Greenfields, 2002), offering the opportunity to undertake field labour and associated work whilst living cheaply; accessing community support and increasing their social capital.

The inter-relationship between New Travellers and other Gypsy/Traveller communities is not uncomplicated by many Gypsies' and Travellers' perceptions that New Travellers have 'adopted' an ethnic identity through choice, although having a distinctly different way of life including significantly greater gender equality, and a typically higher level of 'general education' amongst adults (see further below in relation to children 'born on the road'). The perceptions of a 'chosen' lifestyle are influenced by media confusion over distinct Gypsy/Traveller communities and inflammatory and inaccurate reporting of New Traveller issues (particularly during the 1990s when significant media hostility – now typically reserved for Roma and more recent migrants – was reserved for members of this population) which focused on allegations of substance use, 'dole scrounging' and promiscuity and which caused outrage amongst traditional 'ethnic' Gypsies and Travellers who felt that their communities were being conflated with 'hippie festival goers'.

As a result of the passing of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 which caused significant hardship to nomadic Gypsies and Travellers of all communities many New Travellers returned to living in conventional accommodation or opted to move abroad where they could continue their lifestyle in a less stigmatizing and hostile environment (Dearling, 1998). Despite these difficulties, a considerable number of New Travellers have either returned to travelling (at least seasonally, coming out of houses to work at field labour/festivals for several months of each year) or have continued to live quietly on unauthorized encampments tucked away in rural locations. Evidence exists of a significant number of young New Travellers who were born 'on the road' and have parents and even grandparents who have followed the same way of life since the 1970s. Thus a distinct, vibrant and emerging culture continues to develop amongst New Traveller communities (The Children's Society, 2010) although staff working specifically with members of these groups (for example the Children's Society Participation Project Wessex and the recently closed Robert Barton Trust in Glastonbury) report that some of the difficulties facing 'ethnic' Gypsies and Travellers are being replicated amongst emerging inter-

generational New Traveller populations and thus for example New Travellers who have grown up fully nomadic may have poor literacy skills and sometimes health issues as a result of repeated eviction and lack of access to services. The size of the New Traveller community is hard to quantify although it has been estimated to be in the range of 5,000-8,000 (see Clark and Greenfields, 2006) a figure which includes individuals who reside in houses and 'travel seasonally' for work using vehicles/yurts/bender tents/caravans etc., during the summer. There is an uneven geographical spread of New Travellers with a high percentage of the fully nomadic (with no access to authorized sites or houses) members of the community to be found in the South West of Britain for reasons associated with historical (and to a lesser extent current) patterns of travel for Festival related work and seasonal farm labour picking flowers in Cornwall. In some areas there are significantly larger percentages of fully nomadic New Travellers than Gypsies/Irish Travellers so that, for example in the Dorset GTANA approximately 65% of travelling people are New Travellers (Home and Greenfields, 2006).

Overwhelmingly, (as a result of legal exclusion from public Gypsy/Traveller sites resulting from lack of a distinct ethnic origin as well as in some cases a conscious politicised and 'green' decision to reside in a 'traditional' manner at Green Lanes and halting places) New Travellers live in unauthorised encampments, often in relatively rural areas such as Green Lanes and on Forestry Commission Woodland. Findings from the Dorset GTANA (Home and Greenfields 2006) and the West of England GTANA (Greenfields et al 2007) found that a relatively high percentage of New Travellers indicated a preference for low-impact environmentally friendly sites, or simply to remain living on green lanes or unauthorised encampments with minimal facilities. For horse-drawn New Travellers in particular, the needs for fresh grazing preclude residence at one site for long periods of time.

Within the TEIP we have interviewed a small sample of New Travellers to attempt to understand the ways in which their employment opportunities are changing as a result of the culture-specific circumstances, and to seek to understand if their experiences of economic inclusion/exclusion are similar to those of other travelling groups. Table 13 below provides information on the employment status, level of education, and current accommodation status of interviewees in this group.

As can be seen, two significant differences exist between the New Traveller sample and that of other groups. A higher percentage of New Traveller interviewees were resident at insecure accommodation and thus risked disruption to employment if they were evicted or required to move on (see further Chapter 8) and the general level of education amongst this group was significantly higher than was found amongst other interviewees across all communities. A clear gender split is found in economic practices (as is common with other groups) in that males are more likely to be engaged in 'traditional economic practices' than are women, albeit in one case in a New Traveller culturally specific manner (e.g. engagement with Festival employment rather than 'trading'). Both men were self-employed utilising the flexibility of such economic preferences to move between skilled and semi-skilled work which changed throughout the year according to available opportunities and the seasons. All three female interviewees were engaged with community groups and their Degree level education most likely provided them with a significant advantage in entering into such roles. Remaining in education to a later age than Gypsy and (ethnic) Traveller peers would appear to have provided a greater grounding for sustainable nomadism and flexible employment for these interviewees, as even for those working in 'traditional' Traveller economies, their experiences of a longer formal education (particularly that which provided training and skills) facilitated economic versatility.

In contrast to the media perceptions of New Travellers as 'dole scroungers' and an acknowledgement by one interviewee that in the 1980s and early 1990s there had been a tendency for some New Travellers to consciously utilise social security payments as a 'political statement'; all New Traveller interviewees were in employment and demonstrated a strong work ethic; an economic approach that it has been argued is typical of this group (Webster and Millar, 2001; Greenfields, 1999).

Amongst the three female New Travellers working in community organisations which support Gypsies and Travellers of all ethnicities, there was a highly politicized awareness of the importance of their role in supporting community development. These interviewees felt (in common with Irish Traveller and Gypsy community workers interviewed for the TEIP) that their personal experiences of eviction and prejudice had given them important insights

into the lives of Travellers of all ethnicities and enhanced their effectiveness as support workers for 'ethnic' Gypsies and Travellers.

Despite New Travellers having a generally greater knowledge of 'mainstream' services and available employment options than did 'ethnic' Gypsies and Travellers, (potentially linked to stronger bridging capital as a result of educational and family backgrounds as well as typically higher levels of literacy) some interviewees felt that because of New Travellers' practical circumstances (self-employment/nomadism/insecure accommodation), tailored advice and business support for Gypsies and Travellers would be useful. One interviewee noted:

*"[business support] would be helpful because there's quite a lot of people within the New Traveller community that set up their own businesses and if there was help out there and people offering their help that had some sort of understanding of Travellers needs then it might be better than say a blanket policy that many Travellers might not even know about"*  
(NT F 31-40)

A key problem for four of the New Travellers was accommodation, as their disproportionately insecure accommodation status created significant difficulties in knowing whether employment would be disrupted by eviction. This finding mirrored that of several studies which have considered the needs of New Travellers (Greenfields 1999; 2002; Webster and Millar, 2001; Cemlyn, et. al. 2009 and GTANAs in localities with high numbers of these community members). Three respondents were currently living on unauthorised encampments and one was residing at an unauthorised development (site seeking planning permission). Living on an unauthorised development was felt by the interviewee in that case, to be a distraction from economic activities and a drain on resources with the associated costs of seeking planning permission. The respondents at unauthorised encampments stressed the extreme inconvenience of such accommodation and how it impacted on work patterns, particularly where the New Travellers were waged and expected to be in work on a full-time basis:

*"It was very difficult especially when you are trying to hold down a full-time job. You finish work then you have to turn everything around ready for moving and you can't move until much later in the night in case the police turn up. More often you*



*are up till quite late, three or four in the morning and you got to get up for work the next day. So it's quite tough" (NT F 31-40).*

An additional problem reported by interviewees (common to all Gypsies/Travellers on unauthorised encampments) was experience of police harassment and local prejudice based upon stereotypes of how members of the community would behave. In the case of New Travellers this was exacerbated by media driven perceptions of a hedonistic, drug-fuelled life which was in total contrast to their hard-working daily activities:

*"When we were living on one site local residents came up and first of all we thought they were being friendly, they came up with a bin and they said 'you can put your needles in there' and they said this in front of an 11 year old child. And we said we didn't need that, because they presumed we were Travellers we were all like heroin-addicts as well. In more rural areas you tend to get more prejudice from local people but they tend to not actually come down they just tend to ring the police rather than actually coming and speaking to people on the site. They've had meetings, local meetings about the site but they didn't inform the site about the meetings" (NT F 21-30)*

In general, amongst this small sample of New Travellers, which may not be representative of this group as a whole, and which does not include New Travellers who have been born 'on the road' and thus face the deep educational exclusion identified within some GTANAs (Home and Greenfields, 2006), a spirit of self-reliance and adaptability exists which indicates access to accommodation is likely to be the most effective bridge to economic inclusion for this community. For New Travellers with lower educational and skill bases however, measures such as tailored courses and assistance with educational upskilling may be required to enable them to compete on an equal footing with other 'mainstream' job applicants. The availability of a 'New Traveller' economy (predominantly service industries such as catering, entertainments and site-crew) has enabled self-employment to remain relatively sustainable throughout the summer months for members of this community who can access the 'festival circuit' (see further the Children's Society, 2010). In addition a number of GTANAs have employed New Travellers as interviewers in localities where they form a relatively large population (e.g Home and Greenfields, 2006; Greenfields et. al., 2007). However, competition for other types of flexible self-employment such

as working in field labour is likely to remain strong (both from other Gypsies and Travellers/Roma and migrant workers), diminishing sources of income for individuals without existing additional sources of income or the opportunity to access secure accommodation from which to enter into training.

## Conclusion

As can be seen, the circumstances of Roma and New Travellers both bear some resemblance to that of other Gypsies and Travellers and have distinct cultural variations. In particular, the high incidence of Roma employed in low waged work is similar to findings of a growing trend for this type of work amongst Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

All groups experience poor support in Jobcentres based around lack of knowledge of their communities' lifestyles and specialist needs. The common economic strategy amongst all groups interviewed (the desire for entrepreneurialism and self employment) as an alternative to low paid regimented work, may give both Roma and New Travellers further common cause with Gypsies and Travellers in the sphere of economic inclusion, although New Travellers in particular may face some hostility from 'ethnic' Gypsy and Traveller communities who are often resistant to claims of common purpose from a community which they frequently misunderstand and do not wish to engage with, perceiving New Travellers to have made a 'lifestyle choice' of the type erroneously identified by the DWP/JobCentres referred to in Chapter 5.

In contrast, Roma who have featured alongside Gypsies and Travellers in the DCSF sponsored Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month which focuses on 'ethnicity' and cultural history as a common theme, are increasingly becoming closer to other 'ethnic' groups in a development which indicates the potential for further synergy and cooperation. The relatively recent development of bridging capital between 'ethnic' Roma, Gypsy/Traveller groups and the creation of supra-identity bonding capital between ethnic Gypsies/Travellers has been emphasized by the creation of the Council of Europe European Roma Traveller Forum which has brought together Roma, Gypsies, Irish Travellers and other ethnic travelling communities. Such a process demonstrates that it is possible and practical to bring diverse

travelling/Roma communities together in common projects with the intent of developing change agendas and enhancing community development.

In contrast to this new form of inter-ethnic bridging capital and identification of support needs, New Travellers are relatively marginalised as a group, in that there are very few targeted projects working specifically with members of this community. The Children's Society have run a dynamic youth project in the South West for a number of years (see Children's Society, 2010) and in the same region the Robert Barton Trust undertook in-depth work supporting marginalised and vulnerable New Travellers experiencing health, education and accommodation needs problems. Unfortunately, in the summer of 2010 the Robert Barton Trust closed as a result of loss of funding, ending this highly specialised work. The national organisation, Friends Families and Travellers does still support New Travellers as well as ethnic Gypsies and Travellers (see further Chapter 11) but has no key regional presence in areas where New Travellers are found in greatest numbers.

As identified above, New Travellers experience a number of challenges centred on accommodation and sustainability of self-employment which could permit closer working with Gypsies and Travellers if common cause can be made. The TEIP would hope to see opportunities for cooperation, support and exchange of good practice developing between New Travellers, Roma and Gypsies/Irish Travellers.

The forging of alliances between Roma organisations, other Traveller groups and ultimately discrete marginalised BME communities, holds the potential, so the TEIP would argue, to avert the negativism of 'dual closure' (inward looking models which fail to identify commonality of oppression) towards other groups living at the margins and instead offers the possibility of broad coalitions of the excluded to form effective 'empowerment networks' (Gilchrist, 2004).

Where such 'empowerment networks' can be successfully created, the pooling of limited resources and greater strength of numbers offer the potential of more effective lobbying tools and levers for change as well as developing significantly enhanced waves of 'bridging

capital'. Effective 'empowerment networks' can encompass a range of organisational structures and policy actors, including statutory and voluntary sector agencies and hold the potential to enhance knowledge through recognition of difference rather than homogenization of 'need'. Where this can occur, the diversity found within such 'empowerment networks' can effectively engage intercultural understanding and empower client groups as well as modeling intercultural partnership practice for the majority society. We therefore recommend strongly that this model should be adopted with regard to developing economic inclusion strategies amongst all Gypsy/Traveller and Roma groups.

## Part Three

### *Findings related to Accommodation, Education/Training and Social Capital*

Having considered the accommodation and educational status of Roma and New Travellers in Chapter 7, in these chapters we return to the 'main group' of interviewees, Gypsies and Irish Travellers. In this Section we explore the impact of Accommodation type and experiences of Education/Training on access to Social Capital and economic inclusion.

This part of the report consists of the following Chapters. In Chapter Eight we consider the form of accommodation (housing, authorised and unauthorised sites) on which Gypsies and Irish Travellers reside and their aspirations for other forms of residence, in Chapter 9 we present a consideration of the education and training experiences and desires of participants and discuss how these impact on economic inclusion and financial stability. Finally, in Chapter 10 we contemplate the nature of inter-community relationships and social capitals available to interviewees and the way in which these impact on economic inclusion and access to employment. In Part 4 (the concluding section of the report) we move on to present examples of good practice and policy recommendations for enhancing Gypsy and Traveller economic inclusion.

As in the previous section of this report we have identified key issues and linked these to the relevant Equality Measurement Framework (EMF) domains. These consist of the following factors:

#### **Chapter 8 (Accommodation) Concerns**

\* Overwhelming evidence (see Cemlyn et. al., 2009 for a fuller discussion relating to accommodation exclusion) of inequality of access to culturally appropriate accommodation

The 'forced settlement' into housing of many Gypsies and Travellers as a result of inadequate site provision

\* Growing restrictions on nomadic rights and the location and condition of socially rented accommodation

\* Significant contestation (often including racialised discourse) over development of public and private sites

\* The diminishing prospects of future home ownership for a sizeable section of the community.

\* The impacts of poor accommodation conditions/homelessness on income generation

#### **Related EMF domains**

The capability to enjoy a comfortable standard of living, with independence and security measured by:

\* The ability to enjoy an adequate and secure standard of living including nutrition, clothing, housing, warmth, social security, social services and utilities, and being cared for and supported when necessary

\* Being able to 'get around' inside and outside the home, and to access transport and public places

\* The ability to live with independence, dignity and self-respect

\* Having choice and control over where and how someone lives

\* Enjoyment of one's home in peace and security

\* Being able to access green spaces and the natural world

The capability of being and expressing oneself, and having self-respect can be measured by being able to:

\* Engage in cultural practices, in community with other members of one's chosen group or groups and across communities

\* Living without fear of humiliation, harassment, or abuse based on who someone is

\* Being confident of being treated with dignity and respect

#### **Chapter 9 (Education/Training) Concerns**

\* Evidence of high levels of racism and discrimination in school

\* For some young people an inappropriate curriculum

\* Limited access to internet technology (particularly amongst older TEIP interviewees)

### **Related EMF domains**

To be able to participate in society, measured by:

\* Attaining the highest possible standard of knowledge, understanding and reasoning

\* Being fulfilled and stimulated intellectually, including being creative if someone so wishes

\* Being able to develop the skills for participation in productive and valued activities, including parenting

\* Being able to learn about a range of cultures and beliefs and acquire the skills to participate in a diverse society, including learning English

\* Access education, training and lifelong learning that meets individual needs

\* Accessing information and technology necessary to participate in society

The capability of being and expressing oneself, and having self-respect is measured by:

\* Having freedom of cultural identity and expression of gender

\* Living without fear of humiliation, harassment, or abuse based on who someone is

\* Being confident that an individual will be treated with dignity and respect

Chapter 10 (Social Capital and Community Relations) Concerns:

\* Interviewees reported high levels of discrimination and racism in social, community and work environments

\* The fear and unwillingness of some respondents to reveal their identity

\* Lack of confidence and willingness to be involved in wider community forums and networks

### **Related EMF domains**

The capability to engage in productive and valued activities measured in the following ways:

\* To work in just and favourable conditions, including health and safety, fair treatment during pregnancy, maternity and paternity, fair pay, reasonable hours, and freedom from harassment or discrimination

\* Not be prevented from working in a particular occupation without good reason

The capability to enjoy individual, family and social life and the freedom to:

\* Develop as a person, including self-identity

\* Develop and maintain self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence

The capability of being and expressing oneself, and having self-respect is measured by:

\* Having freedom of cultural identity and expression of gender

\* Living without fear of humiliation, harassment, or abuse based on who someone is

\* Being confident that an individual will be treated with dignity and respect

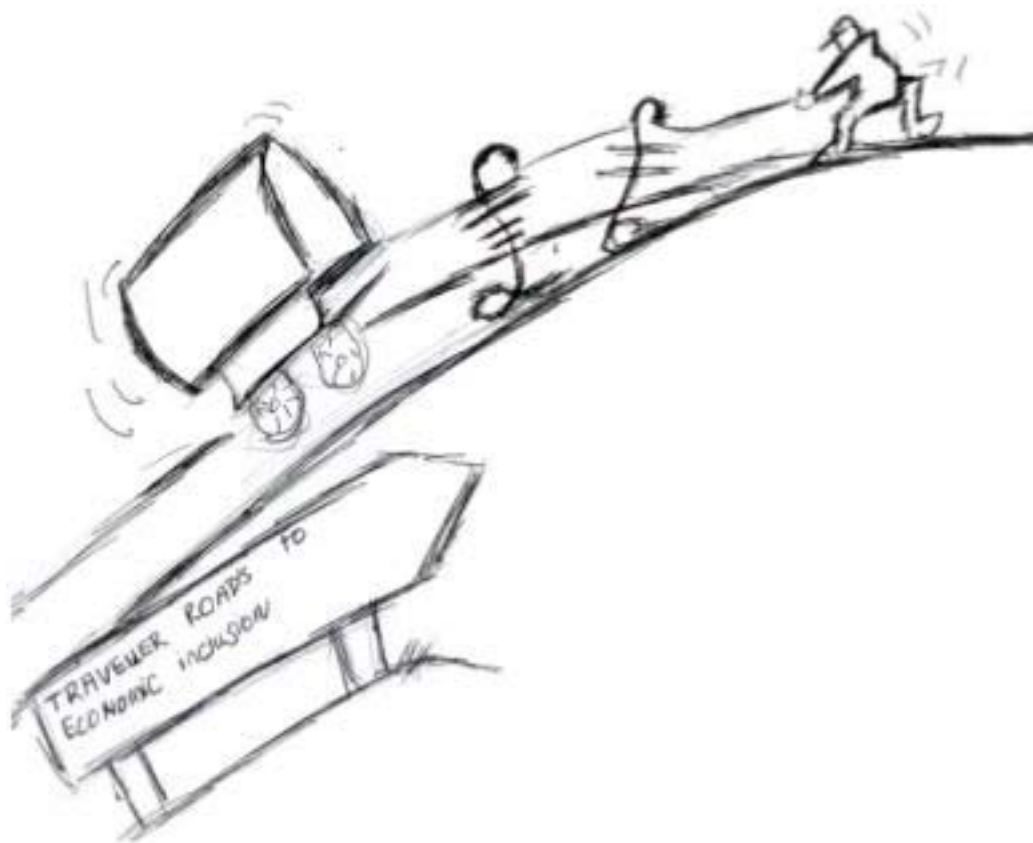
The capability to participate in decision-making, have a voice and influence is assessed by someone's ability to:

\* Participate in decision-making and make decisions affecting their own life independently

\* Participate in the local community

\* Form and join civil organisations and solidarity groups, including trade unions

See further Turner et. al. (2010) 'Good Relations Measurement Framework' for a more in-depth exploration of the processes of measuring community relations and greater discussion on the above domains.



# ***Chapter Eight***

## ***Accommodation***



## Chapter Eight

### Accommodation

#### Introduction

In many ways access to accommodation is (as identified in so many reports which have come before, see further Cemlyn, et. al., 2009) the key to this study; as having somewhere to live is the prime determiner of household stability, well-being, access to services, employment patterns and economic wellbeing. Within this chapter we assess the fundamental importance of accommodation type, status and stability to the interviewees who participated in the TEIP and consider the entwinement which persists between this topic and all other aspects of the report.

#### Gypsy/Traveller Interviewees' Accommodation Histories (Generational Change)

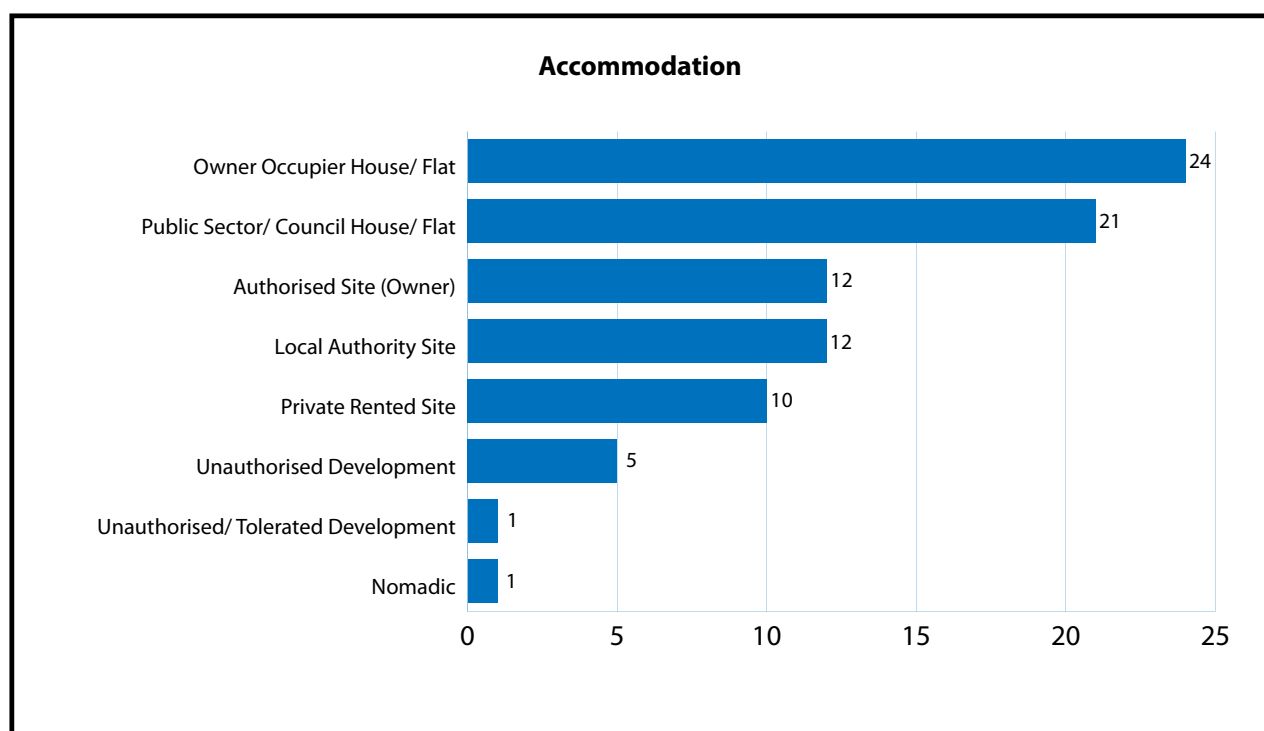
Approximately three quarters of the G/IT interviewees' parents had lived a fully nomadic lifestyle for a least some of their lives. In addition, when recounting narratives of their own early life experiences, 36/86 (41%) interviewees reported that their households had been nomadic for some periods of time. This finding was most evident in the respondents who were aged over forty. A further group of 30 interviewees (34%) reported that in their early lives their families had lived in a mixture of accommodation types, typically alternating between living on unauthorised encampments with intermittent stays on permanent sites and in housing. Once again the overwhelming majority of this sub-sample reported that their own parents had been nomadic in their youth although the majority of this older generation made the transition over time into secure accommodation (predominantly on authorised sites which were either privately owned or rented from the local authority. A smaller percentage, only 10% of the G/IT sample (predominantly younger interviewees below 30) reported that their parents had lived mainly in housing. The transition from nomadism into diverse accommodation types and mapping this transition across the age-bands of respondents thus enables us to hold a mirror up to prevailing State policies which impacted on succeeding generations of Gypsies and Travellers.

The transition from agricultural work, scrap dealing and hawking (the economic core of traditional nomadism) to other employment practices is inextricably entwined with the accommodation history of the TEIP respondents, as economic adaption has occurred in response to the shortage of sites and stopping places and adoption of more sedentary accommodation patterns.

#### Current Accommodation

Table 14 (next page) presents the accommodation type and tenure status of G/IT respondents. The most dramatic finding is the high proportion (52%) of economically active respondents living in housing. The TEIP tentatively posits that this stark figure which demonstrates the decline in traditional accommodation types of many economically active Gypsies and Traveller may be a factor in the 'success' of some respondents in higher managerial positions who have used their sedentarism (particularly when their parents moved into housing and the respondent has accessed education) to support a more 'mainstream' career path. Simultaneously, for respondents who are more economically excluded (for example those working in relatively low paid/skilled work) residence in public sector housing may be reflective of their own or parents' transition to housing as a result of the decline of traditional economic and accommodation options. As discussed in Chapter 10, enforced residence in areas suffering from poverty of place may have the effect of enhancing bonding capital in response to experiences of racism as well as exacerbating educational and social exclusion and minimizing opportunities to improve personal circumstances (see further Greenfields and Smith, 2010).

Despite the fact that around one in four Gypsies and Travellers living in caravans are legally homeless (having nowhere on which they can in law station their home (Johnson & Willers, 2007) only one interviewee was predominantly nomadic, whilst another resided on a tolerated unauthorised encampment. The five respondents (6% of the sample) living on unauthorised developments are reflective of a growing phenomenon, that of families whose legal accommodation status is precarious but who are able to utilize their relative stability of residence to access employment and economic inclusion.

**Table 17 Accommodation Status (Gypsy and Irish Traveller Interviewees (Total 86))**

Increased number of Gypsies and Travellers living in housing, but low numbers with a mortgage. Just over half of the G/IT sample (45/86) were living in housing. Of the twenty four respondents who were living in owner-occupier housing a strong age-related pattern was discernable. Only one person in this category was between the ages of 21-30; two were aged 31-40, and the remaining twenty one interviewees in this category were forty or over. In comparison, (in 2008) amongst the wider mainstream community the proportion of younger households (below the age of 30) with a mortgage accounted for thirty-two per cent of owner-occupiers (Survey of English Housing Preliminary Results 2007/08).

TEIP found that just below fifty percent of the G/IT interviewees lived on permanent or secure authorised sites. Twelve interviewees (14%) dwelt at private authorised sites (self/family owned) with a further ten respondents (12%) renting pitches on private sites. Another 12 interviewees (14% percent) rented pitches on local authority sites and 5 interviewees (6%) were living at private (family owned) unauthorised developments with a precarious legal status. Finally two interviewees were primarily nomadic living at unauthorised encampments.

36 interviewees in the G/IT sample/41 percent owned their own homes (either sites or houses). In contrast, 68% of the 'mainstream' wider population are owner-occupiers or have a mortgage (Survey of English Housing Preliminary Results 2007/08). This contrast demonstrates clearly the degree of financial exclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers (e.g. lack of capital and financial exclusion from access to mortgages/loans see further below) and the impacts on community-wide housing tenure where this degree of 'ethnicity/sector poverty' exists.

We have taken residence in 'rented' accommodation to include the categories of both public sector housing and sited accommodation. Just under fifty percent of the G/IT sample were living in rented accommodation equating to 21 interviewees (24% of sample) living in housing whilst twenty two rented pitches (12/14% on local authority sites; and 10/12% on private sites). This figure contrasted with the figures from 'mainstream' communities where approximately 30% of households live in rented accommodation (Survey of English Housing Preliminary Results 2007/08). Whilst this discrepancy may relate to financial exclusion amongst G/IT communities it is also a possibility that the impact of lack

of adequate site provision has skewed this finding. Individuals who are unable/unwilling to accept residing in housing are constrained by the limited numbers of pitches available to rent/buy if a family are unwilling or unable to risk purchasing land without planning permission/engaging with the planning system to obtain a site license or if they are reluctant to set up an unauthorised development. The shortage of sites for sale with pre-existing planning permission has also (extrapolated from GTANA data, focus group findings and a crude analysis of sites available for sale through auctioneers and advertised through specialist journals such as Travellers Times) led to a grossly inflated market price for such land, placing the opportunity of owner-occupier site purchase still further beyond many families on average incomes.

Extrapolating from these findings we calculate that approximately half of all Gypsies and Travellers are resident in socially/private rented accommodation, a figure which bears further comparison to the 49 per cent of Bangladeshi households living in social housing (Survey of English Housing Preliminary Results 2007/08) although indicative of the discrepancies existing in relation to social accommodation provision for Gypsies and Travellers and other communities who have a preference for house-dwelling. The overall figures of approximately half of the G/IT interviewees in the TEIP living in housing is reflective of Niner's (2003) estimate that 50% of community members are living in 'conventional accommodation', although the TEIP findings should not be taken as reflective of whole-community data as we may have identified a higher percentage of economically successful households operating in the 'Traveller economy' who reside on sites.

Having outlined the accommodation status of interviewees in the remainder of this chapter we discuss respondents' positive and negative experiences of living in different types of accommodation and assess the impact of such residence on economic/social inclusion and employment patterns.

### **Positive Experiences of Accommodation**

One extremely positive finding from the TEIP data was that many of the interviewees stated that they had a good sense of community and were able to access emotional support from

neighbours as well as utilising a strong network of social capital built up through connections to their place of residence (see further the Wigfield, et. al., 2010 for a discussion on 'good community relations as a marker of social inclusion'). Interestingly, and reflective of the already high levels of community bonding capital noted earlier, such comments were more evident amongst Gypsies and Travellers living on sites (both public and private):

*"We've been there for a long time. I'd rather be on the site because at least when you are there you know your next-door neighbour. It is safe and it's very friendly. When I leave here [work] and go home there I get 'Did you go to work today?' that kind of thing and they go around my dad's [support for family members] when I'm not there". (IT F 21-30).*

Regardless of tenure or accommodation type, for respondents who had previously lived on unauthorised encampments personal/family security and improved access to services such as education and healthcare and employment opportunities were most frequently cited as positive features of permanent accommodation. Housed Gypsies and Travellers who have previously lived on roadside sites (see further below) often strongly commended the access to heat and running water (see further Greenfields and Smith, 2010).

In the following section we use participants' narrative to explore the positive and negative aspects of each type of accommodation.

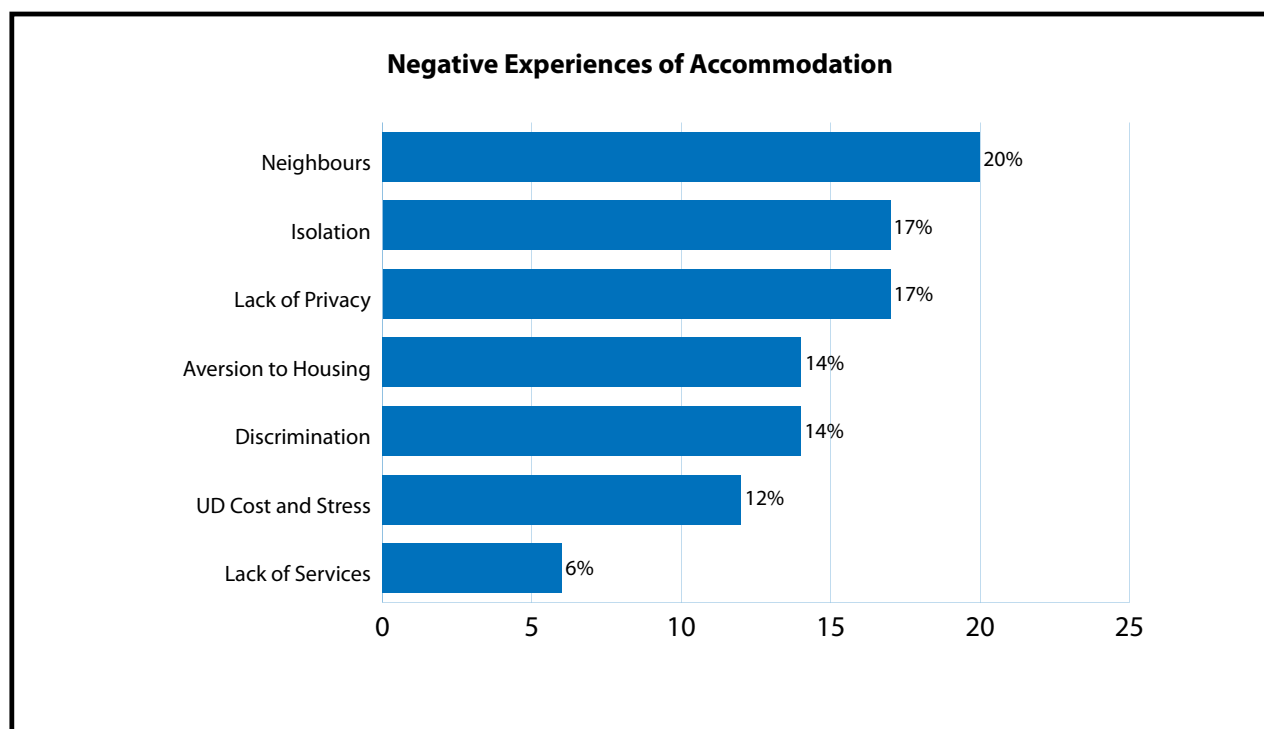
### **Negative Experiences of Accommodation**

Table 15 (below) lists the key categories identified by respondents when asked to identify problematic issues associated with their current accommodation. Only 37/86 (43%) of respondents identified problems indicating that 57% of respondents were largely happy with their place of residence. These categories are discussed in greater detail below with regard to each accommodation type.

### **Negatives Aspects of Traditional Nomadic Lifestyles**

Regulations limiting the opportunities for nomadism are regarded as a major problem

Although only two respondents were currently

**Table 18 – Negative Aspects of Current Accommodation**

living on unauthorised encampments (1 nomadic/1 tolerated unauthorised site) the commonality of experience of such nomadism meant that many participants were able to contrast 'traditional' lifestyles with their current circumstances. The key aspect of nomadic life which respondents identified as problematic related to State intervention in lifestyle. A decline in traditional stopping places and a raft of legislation aimed at restricting unauthorised encampments were identified by many interviewees as having limited the feasibility of nomadic lifestyles:

*"We lived on road sides and in trailers. Going back to my mum and dad - half of the time they were living in tents on the side of the road. When I got married I was still moving on to the side of the roads but became permanent [securely sited] when I moved down here 5 or 6 years ago. I'm permanent and I'll never move off. I will never pull on the road sides again. Well, you'll be on the road sides and get moved on and with the children you have to get up at 2-3 o'clock in the morning lift them with their blankets around them drive probably the next 2 or 3 hours before you find the next place to move on to" (IT F 31-40).*

For some respondents these dramatic changes and move from nomadic lifestyles to more

sedentary ones created a sense of loss:

*"I still miss the travelling a great deal, I think that is a great sadness that there is less freedom to travel now. I think if there were more traveling; stopping places whether it is private sites or local authority sites it would allow travel again which I think is very good for the community. Today the accommodation is so limited everything is gridlocked now. You don't leave the site that you are on as finding somewhere else to pull into is now so difficult" (G F 41-50).*

The insecurity of unauthorised encampments and the threat of constant eviction could also make it difficult to hold down waged employment, a point identified by New Travellers (who were more likely to be living at unauthorised encampments/roadside locations than other interviewees) as well as G/ITs:

*"It was very difficult especially when you are trying to hold down a full-time job. You finish work then you have to turn everything around ready for moving and you can't move until much later in the night in case the police turn up. More often you are up till quite late, three or four in the morning and you got to get up for work the next day. So it's quite tough" (NT F 31-40).*



As we have noted elsewhere, limitations on nomadism are encouraging a shift to more settled work patterns for many interviewees and their families or in some cases undertaking work in the traditional Traveller economy in mainland Europe (See Chapter Four and findings from GTANA evidence).

### **Problems associated with Unauthorised Developments**

Living on an unauthorised encampment/development can contribute to economic and social exclusion

The repeal of the statutory duty to provide Gypsy and Traveller sites under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA) 1994 led to an increasing emphasis on encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to buy land and develop their private sites. Under the provisions of Planning Circulars 1/94 and 1/06 local authorities were expected to assist Gypsies and Travellers in identifying appropriate land although this has been a slow and highly contested process (Richardson and Ryder, 2010). Many Gypsies and Travellers have argued that a systemic failure by local authorities to fulfil their duties to identify appropriate land has created a situation where it is logical (and creates a better chance of obtaining planning permission) for families to buy land, move on to it and then seek retrospective planning permission. Such forms of private, unauthorised sites are known as Unauthorised Developments.

Applications for planning permission for private (usually self or family-owned) Gypsy sites are typically refused at first hearing, often following orchestrated campaigns by aggrieved (sedentary) local residents (Richardson, 2007). Prospects for being approved at appeal (particularly when the family are already in residence) are significantly greater, especially since the introduction of planning circular 1/2006 which states that if there is a local shortage of sites this must be classified as a material consideration in the planning process (Cemlyn et al 2009). A number of interviewees were living on unauthorised developments or had recently obtained permanent or temporary planning permission for a family site. Twelve interviewees expressed concern about the cost of the planning process/appeal and extreme levels of stress associated with purchasing and residing on an unauthorised development.

The following quotations reveal some of the fear, frustrations and distress experienced by interviewees:

*"I live on an unauthorised development. When I came to live here back in 2003 this place was passed [granted planning permission] for [the owner's] life. Six months later they revoked my license. So since 2004 I've been trying to get back my planning permission to stay here but my health is not that great at the moment - myself and my wife are in poor health. The good thing is that my family is around me and we always have someone to look after us but the bad thing here is we are living in fear of being evicted because at my age I'm under the doctor's, under hospital appointments and my wife is under hospital appointments. So the situation is, you are living in fear that you get moved, if you get moved you can't see the doctors so you'll die if you don't get the right medication. Our doctors at the moment are the most wonderful people in the world. I think we wouldn't be alive without these doctors" (IT M 71-80).*

For the interviewees (particularly those who were older or in poor health such as the couple above) protracted planning disputes were physically and emotionally challenging. The process could be extremely problematic if the family faced literacy problems or did not fully understand the issues involved and for all respondents in such circumstances (particularly those who were self-employed in the Traveller economy) such applications were a financial drain in terms of legal bills and associated expenses involved in attempting to defend against eviction and obtain planning permission. The situation also represented a significant distraction from economic activities:

*"They say they want more sites for Travellers they are advising you to buy your own land, you buy your own land but they don't want you to own your own land. You can't really concentrate on your work while you have to fight for getting your site passed. The council seems to be OK with us. We are going on to the main drains; we got all the planning [permission]. now what we wanted, and we get on with the locals. The kids are all in school and I'm a tax payer, I'm not taking nothing out of the community and I'm putting money into the community. If you get peace and quiet to live and you get your own property you can do what you want to do eventually. I want to put an office on the site with my computers, phone line and fax machine. What people don't want to understand*



*is that if my business is successful I'll be employing people and it means less people are going to be unemployed. I can employ somebody from the Traveller as well as from the housed community" (G M 21-30).*

*"Yes, it did [affect business whilst the site was unauthorised]. I never went to work. All I did was this [focus on the planning case]. We sold everything we had. I had a new chalet when we was on the [council] site, sold everything and that kept me going all through it. My brother went to work after a few months and went to work every day, but I worked on this like a job of work and besides that I had to do this chalet up as we were in trailers. The rest of the time I worked constantly at getting it passed. Constantly at it! I think that was one of the reasons we were successful, because we constantly worked at it" (G M 41-50).*

Living on an authorised site contributes towards economic and social inclusion

Despite the anxiety and expense of such planning applications respondents were all agreed that, once planning permission was granted, residence on a private site was a significant key to greater financial stability for a family as well as enabling access to increased rates of social and economic inclusion:

*"I think we've just settled more and more. My sister has got 2 boys they go to schools; they are in the local football team with the school and my daughter goes to college. My husband's business took off a bit more [as], he has got a reputation for what he does in the local area. Obviously not being on the council site where we were and moving to here it helped us no end because when we advertise or want to sell something it is a lot easier to sell from here than it was to sell from the council site. You have these stereotypes attached to the [council] site" (G F 51-60).*

### Negative aspects of Housing

Housed Gypsies and Travellers (particularly in public sector accommodation) frequently experience acute exclusion

As discussed above, the interview data revealed that in recent years there had been a significant rise in the number of interviewees living in housing who at earlier periods in their lives had been nomadic or lived on Traveller sites. There is little published research into the experiences

of housed Gypsies and Travellers (Cemlyn et al 2009). However, that which exists is consistent in identifying poor health outcomes associated with residence in housing; with particular emphasis on a decline in mental health (Van Cleemput et al, 2007; Greenfields and Smith, 2010). It is estimated that at least half of the Gypsy and Traveller populations of the UK live in housing (CRE, 2004). A report by Shelter (2007) noted the extreme isolation that housing can have for Gypsy and Traveller families as well as in some cases fragmentation of social and work networks (Richardson et. al., 2007). Some studies indicate that interviewees experience extreme frustration at their lack of mobility and what they see as a deliberate destruction of their nomadic culture and forced assimilation (Cemlyn et. al., 2009; Greenfields and Smith, 2010; Clark and Greenfields, 2006), all elements identified by interviewees in the TEIP (Chapter 10):

*"I detest it [being in a house]. I hate it. I'd be in a trailer in half a minute if there was anywhere [to live], a decent local site. I have neighbours, I speak to my next door neighbour but the neighbours apart from that I couldn't tell you what they look like never mind their names. I don't like that; I like to know people, I like to see who is around me, there's no community spirit anymore. In an ideal world I'd rather be in a trailer travelling up and down but it's not practical, next best thing's a site obviously, but there's nowhere decent in the town" (G M 31-40).*

Despite the isolation which was frequently cited by interviewees, for some participants housing was a welcome respite from the cycle of eviction, as well as providing better access to services and physical security for their family. However, making the transition to living in a house also introduced interviewees to new cultural patterns and challenges, such as having to come to terms with household budgeting for utilities bills (as opposed to buying a gas bottle when required) which were new and daunting experiences for some interviewees:

*"I've never ever had any knowledge about council tax, paying water rates because when you live in a trailer on the side of the road you don't do things like that. There should be someone who comes when you move from a trailer and from a Gypsy life, a Traveller life and move into a house. A person should be in every town who is specialised in showing people to do the bills because I had to find out on my own. I'm the only one who lives in*

*a house, no one else has done it in my family. It was verystressful at the time. I went to the Citizens Advice Bureau. They were helpful and they sorted things out they made an action plan about everything what I needed to do" (G F 41-50).*

As discussed further in Chapter 12 there are a number of good practice examples such as the employment of local authority housing outreach staff and the use of Supporting People projects to provide advice to Gypsies and Travellers making the transition into housing. However, such projects are limited in geographical area and may not be accessed by the very families most in need of support.

**Housed Gypsies and Travellers are more closely linked to the waged economy**

Individuals and families living in houses were (in our TEIP sample) primarily engaged in waged labour. Whilst some interviewees whose families were long-term settled had participated in a more 'mainstream' career path, for others who had formerly been involved in the Traveller economy new challenges could arise. Thus, the transition from 'traditional' to paid employment in some cases may have arisen as a response to the fact that lack of constant contact with Traveller social networks meant there were less opportunities of, and peer expectations to, work within the Traveller Economy. We have seen too (Chapter 5) some interviewees reporting moving away from their former sites to escape the peer pressure they had faced after having taken up occupations which were considered to be outside the norm of Traveller economic practices.

### **Negative aspects of living on Local Authority Sites**

The duty to provide public Gypsy and Traveller sites created by the 1968 Caravan Sites Act (repealed in 1994 under the CJPOA) led to the creation of approximately 350 sites in England. As has been well documented, many publicly provided sites were of poor quality, and are located on land deemed unsuitable for 'conventional housing' e.g. built on contaminated land or located close to motorways, adjoining sewage works etc. As a result of the shortage of site provision many public sites have become overcrowded and despite access in some cases to centrally funded refurbishment grants many are still in

extremely poor or unsafe condition (Niner, 2003; Richardson, 2007; Cemlyn et. al., 2009).

*"They put the sites on the railways lines or they put a big bank all the way round or put it somewhere where nobody can see us. I mean we are people we deserve to be seen" (G M 71-80).*

Thus, many Gypsies and Travellers who reside on local authority sites, find themselves living in poorly selected locations, in poor quality and badly maintained accommodation where for example 'slabs' on which caravans are placed are cracked and broken or utility blocks containing washing machines and showers are damp or poorly heated (Cemlyn et al 2009, Niner, 2003), and frequently facing high rates of unemployment. A consistent complaint amongst tenants concerns the high rents which are disproportionate when one considers that residents must provide their own homes (caravans); and that services are frequently poorly delivered so that (for example) post is delivered to a central point on site to be collected by tenants or rubbish collection is from a central point or at the main gate of a potentially large site. It has been claimed in a number of reports that poor services and high rents on public sites may both be a cause of friction between neighbours and between local authorities and residents as well as a disincentive to some families to come off benefits and gain employment (ITMB 2007; Cemlyn et. al., 2009). Whilst some local authorities are rightly praised for their high standards and responsive staff, all too often, the combination of dreadful accommodation conditions and the often isolated locations of sites, which may have poor transport links to adjoining neighbourhoods, exacerbate the risk of social exclusion created by geographical paucity of place.

### **Economic Barriers for Public Site Residents**

**Nomadism is becoming less financially viable as an economic strategy**

Niner, in her 2003 survey of local authority sites quoted a respondent who felt that more sedentary living patterns associated with residence on public sites was damaging the economic sustainability of Gypsy and Traveller families. This particular interviewee argued further that the reasons for following a nomadic lifestyle are both economic and cultural and

thus benefit dependency follows adoption of a static lifestyle (Niner, 2003, 210).

Whilst this argument was advanced in relation to restrictions on how long an individual could leave an 'empty' pitch and thus perhaps was more valid some years ago than now, there are still a number of core truths in this statement. However, such are the restrictions on nomadism in the 21st Century that it is probably far more difficult to operate a viable business for a family who are predominantly nomadic, even if they do have a 'homebase' to which they can return.

In the TEIP survey respondents with more successful businesses within the 'Traveller Economy' had predominantly adopted more sedentary lifestyles (even if they remained living on a site). However, increasing poverty of place and high unemployment associated with some sites and localities potentially has something of a 'domino effect' reducing the opportunities for generating work (and associated in-family/group on-the-job training) within the Traveller Economy as members of close social networks are all (or mainly) unemployed as a result of their tendency to utilise bonding social capital to access work.

There is employment discrimination/exclusion linked to residence on sites

Interviewees living on local authority sites frequently referred to address based discrimination as exacerbating unemployment, with potential employers not wanting to offer jobs to people who are clearly identified as Gypsies and Travellers. This issue of discrimination in access to employment is discussed in greater depth in Chapter Ten

A number of reports have found that Traveller businesses (predominantly in the traditional economy) have suffered significantly from site restrictions on trading/certain trades and a concomitant failure by local authorities to help Travellers adapt to such restrictions where these have been introduced, or when a family move to such a location (ITMB 2007; Cemlyn et. al., 2009). Thus for example, Niner (2003, pp. 119-120) found that on 68 per cent of sites she surveyed, working was not permitted from the site (for example, storage of scrap or disposal of green waste from gardening work).

In addition, Communities and Local Government guidance on site design explicitly discourages work spaces being provided on

pitches whilst failing to recommend alternative models for supporting economic activities amongst those working in the traditional Traveller economy:

*"Gypsy and Traveller sites are essentially residential and those living there are entitled to a peaceful and enjoyable environment. Draft Communities and Local Government guidance on site management proposes that working from residential pitches should be discouraged and that residents should not normally be allowed to work elsewhere on site" (CLG 2008).*

Little evidence in the TEIP survey of support for on-site work areas – nearby work areas would be welcomed

As we have identified above there is considerable evidence of unemployment amongst residents of local authority sites (Cemlyn et. al). In part, because of our concentration on employed and 'successful'/financially included Gypsies and Travellers we only undertook twelve interviews with G/ITs living on local authority sites. Of these twelve respondents, none expressed concerns about working restrictions on sites, although this is likely to relate to the fact that these men were predominantly engaged in activities such as market training, retail sales, window fitting, construction and gardening work that do not require extensive 'on site' work activities. Some types of work e.g. repair of machinery, whilst technically against site rules are regarded as easier to conceal or in some locations are permitted under site regulations. Only one respondent explicitly mentioned work restrictions on local authority sites and he was supportive of the idea of regulation of work related activities on rented sites:

*"Sites have got to be a place to live first. OK the guy next door deals in trailers but what if he was dumping dung or burning copper? I agree that they need a place to work from, but why does it have to be on the site? Work can be done from somewhere else - like an industrial estate not from a home. When this place was first built there was a compound where you could do work and it was horrendous. You don't want to come home and try and get your car past loads of cars dripping oil and loads of muck all over the place" (G M 61-70).*

Whilst highly sympathetic to the point raised by the interviewee above, the feasibility of such zoning of work/residential areas does to a large extent depend upon alternative locations being

available for individuals who work from home. It should be noted however, that few local authorities have ensured access to off-site work areas and rental of plots on industrial estates does depend upon access to a suitable location, the willingness of the estate owner to rent space to a Gypsy or Traveller and the self employed person engaged in the Traveller economy having access to enough of a regular income to be able to afford such a rental. Given that a large number of local authority sites are located in deprived areas, as are a number of housing estates with large concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers (see further Cemlyn et al, 2009), high levels of surrounding social exclusion and associated poor access to services, support and limited work opportunities are likely to be critical hurdles to be overcome if effective strategies are to be developed for supporting the traditional Traveller economy amongst public site residents.

### Personal Finance Issues

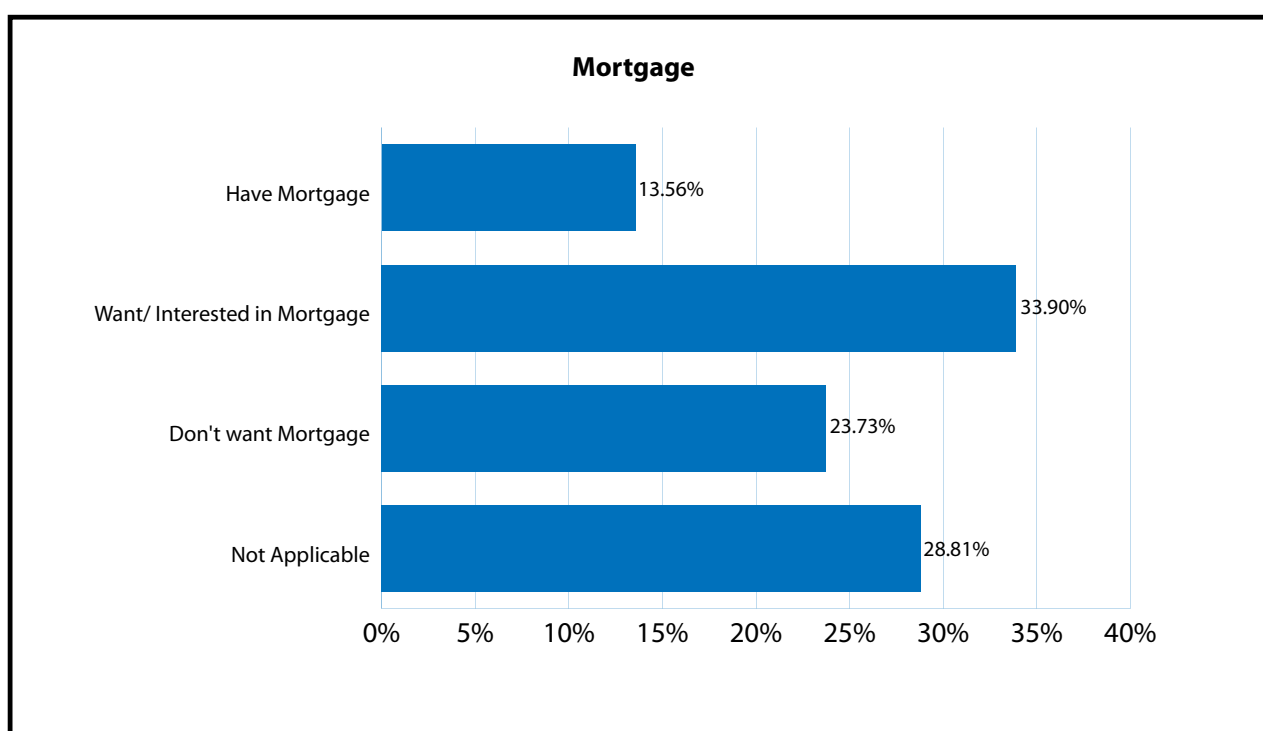
The subject of access to/interest in mortgages and levels of debt are regarded as particularly sensitive subjects when undertaking research with Gypsy and Traveller communities who are perhaps more 'private' with regard to personal financial matters than are many more

mainstream populations who are potentially familiar with surveys and research which explores financial status in considerable detail. In total 59/86 (69%) of the sample discussed some element of personal finances with the TEIP team.

The findings relating to interest in/desire for a mortgage varied according to the current accommodation status of respondents. Of the sample of G/ITs resident in housing, 8 interviewees/13.5% reported that they already had a mortgage whilst (20 interviewees/34% reported that they would like to be able to buy property/obtain a mortgage if they could. Nearly one in four respondents (24% of the sample) who answered this question did not wish to obtain a mortgage which is considerably higher than we would expect to see in the 'mainstream' population where nearly 70% of households are owner-occupiers (see above). Almost another third of respondents (28%) reported that the question was not applicable to their circumstances. This figure largely relates to interviewees who stated that they felt their credit history, ethnicity and (for older people) age would be a significant drawback to securing a mortgage.

Those respondents who lived in houses and owned their properties outright were largely

**Table 19: Gypsy and Irish Travellers and Access to Mortgages**





older people who lived in self-built bungalows (the form of 'conventional housing of choice for many Gypsies and Travellers, see further GTANA evidence and Cemlyn et. al, 2009) on land which they had purchased years previously when land costs were greatly less than their current prices.

One younger interviewee had managed to attain a mortgage-free existence by buying a derelict home and undertaking the renovation himself. Another (housed) interviewee in waged employment acquired a mortgage because she felt that there was little difference in cost between paying a mortgage and paying rent.

*"My rent was 400 pounds a month and my mortgage is not much more than that so I thought one day 'it is a waste [paying rent]' and some day it is going to be something for my children whether they want it or not" (IT F 41-50).*

TEIP found significant opposition to taking out loans to buy homes

Despite the number of respondents who indicated an interest in ways of financing home ownership, in general, interviewees expressed 'in principle' an opposition to mortgages or doubts that they would be a viable option for people in their position:

*"I don't like to be in debt. My view on that point is if you want to buy something and if you have got the money then go ahead but if you haven't, don't get into any debt. That's how I look at it" (G F 31-40)*

*"I live in a bungalow, this is mine, there's no mortgage. In the past I did take out a loan and when I retired I got a gratuity and paid it off. I don't owe anyone anything. This place cost me 14k... I don't think they [other Travellers] will go for a mortgage, its well outside their scope. I was lucky I worked for the council but most Travellers work for themselves. If Travellers could buy land with planning permission they would jump at that" (G M 71-80).*

The first quotation reveals traditional Gypsy and Traveller ambivalence towards debt, a finding which is congruent with attitudes to preferences for Traveller economies/self-employment, independence and employment flexibility (see further Chapter 4), all factors which will prove further obstacles to mortgage uptake, over and above lack of fiscal assets. The quotations below reveal typical trepidation about the experience

of taking out a mortgage – a procedure which is new to most Gypsies and Travellers and has not been internalised as 'normalised debt' as is common within mainstream society:

*"We thought about a mortgage a few years ago when my husband had a job and earned enough to cover the monthly payment and then he lost his job and he got a new one but it is not guaranteed. I thought if he happens to lose that job we would lose the house as well so we carried on renting it from the council" (G F 31-40).*

*"I built a bungalow that was back in 1984. Before that I had another bungalow but that never did me no good. I was in regular work then. As soon as I got the mortgage I got made redundant and it made me go a bit doolally [depressed/suffering from mental ill-health] in my nerves because of the pressure of a mortgage. I swore from that day that if I couldn't have something I can't pay for I won't have it" (G M 61-70).*

Discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers limits the opportunities to secure credit

As a result of awareness and experience of the sometimes precarious nature of the Traveller economy there was a feeling amongst interviewees that certain lifestyle/work patterns could make Gypsies and Travellers ineligible for a mortgage. When this was coupled with justifiable concerns pertaining to discrimination as a result of their ethnic origins (see further Chapter 10) many respondents felt that they would be refused credit if they should ever apply for a loan or mortgage to purchase land or a house.

*"I personally don't have a mortgage literally because of my work history and because of the way... I don't want to sound like I'm a victim but the race issue has been a problem a number of times at work so I haven't actually stayed in certain jobs for long. I had just a couple of places where they obviously judged me on my work merit and not on my ethnicity" (G M 21-30).*

*"Travellers don't have much of a credit rating and you need a credit rating to get a mortgage. I was lucky because I'd taken a couple of loans out and my dad helped because my dad got a loan out before so it wasn't too bad. Banks don't worry about lending the money if you are going to stay there for the long term, they are always frightened that you are going to sell and go to somewhere else" (G F 31-40).*



A further obstacle cited by interviewees was a lack of awareness about the actual processes involved in taking out a mortgage:

*"Yes, it would be lovely but we don't know how to go about it, the majority don't know how to go about it. We don't know how to get a loan. You need proper official jobs and things like that. We'd love to be helped to do this. How can we?" (IT M 31-40).*

Some interviewees were unaware of what a mortgage actually was and such was their level of financial exclusion they did not even have a bank account. For some interviewees without a fixed address they could not even accrue the level of documentation and credit history to take the first step on the ladder of financial inclusion by obtaining a bank account. Thus, a mortgage was for some particularly excluded Gypsies and Travellers an unobtainable dream:

*"I can't get a bank account. I've been down there I need 7 forms of ID all to the same address and I just can't do it. I've been to lots of different banks and they say we need telephone bills and a water bill and I just haven't got them" (G F 21-30).*

One older interviewee stressed that access to mortgages would be beneficial for Gypsies and Travellers, particularly as allowing greater economic stability if they could obtain a site through obtaining access to financial inclusion. He stressed that during the current period of restricted credit Gypsies and Travellers are probably more adaptable than many other populations and through a combination of thrift, hard work and informal borrowing, families could probably gather the required capital to purchase land:

*"I think they would be interested in owning, part-owning or buying their own land. But you know with this credit crunch, people were hurt with this credit crunch. I think Gypsies are more adaptable than that. I think when there is a credit crunch they don't want credit, they are better suited to pulling their belts in according to their means and not being in trouble and I think that is a good way to go" (G F 61-70).*

The above quotation contains some revealing insights into traditional G/IT approaches to financial matters. In the past, rather than get into debt, Gypsies and Travellers would save money towards major purchases. To a certain extent the traditional Traveller economy was

effective in reducing outlay on accommodation through enabling participants to practice nomadism which simultaneously maximised their potential to generate income through traveling considerable distances to access work. A number of the interviewees recounted how they or their parents had moved from following nomadic practices to more sedentary lifestyles, as a result of having acquired their own family sites with the capital saved during the years of nomadic employment. Families who had developed their family sites reported that they had often been able to do so because the land they had purchased had been at the time relatively cheap or (in the case of some unauthorised developments) was low cost agricultural land enabling them to use any purchase money left over to pay legal fees to fight for planning permission.

*"I suppose it would work for younger ones [credit for home ownership], I'm too old for that, this piece of land cost me only £1000 but now they would want a considerable lot more for a 'passed' [with planning permission] piece of land. A lot depends on what a lad has coming in and how much debt he wants. You can't get a banker to give a mortgage on land only if there is a house on it" (G M 51-60).*

For some respondents, buying low cost agricultural land was the only option to purchase land for a family site, as is testified by the interviewee quoted above (and see further earlier discussion on inflated prices charged for land with extant planning permission for a Traveller site). That it is not currently possible for an individual to secure credit on land without planning permission (a theme to which we return in Chapter 12) is one factor in driving inflated costs for Traveller sites, coupled with a failure of local authorities to identify affordable land. This reduced ability for families to develop sites from which they can develop their economic activities is strongly implicated in the decline of the 'Traveller Economy' reducing the options of having work/home bases as well as the ability to increase the value of assets tied to land ownership.

### ***Aspirations to own Sites***

Self-provision is the ideal of many Gypsies and Travellers

There is abundant evidence that residence

at a 'self-provided' private family site is the preferred option for large numbers of Gypsies and Travellers interviewed for GTANAs and other associated studies (Thomason, 2006; Greenfields & Home, 2007; Cemlyn et. al., 2009). These findings were confirmed in the interviews for the TEIP in which a quarter of the survey expressed a preference for a privately owned site:

*"I'd like to have a piece of land for my own family for my own clan and look after it. There is a lot of land in England that is just wasted. Take the numbers of the Gypsies up and down England and Ireland and take the non-used land. I don't mean the green belt land and forests I mean the non-used ones. Little plots of land, let the Gypsies buy them, let the Gypsies put their own things and facilities on them and let them get on with it. No drain on the community no drain on the council, we're pay our way and leave us be" (G M 51-60).*

High land costs and restrictions are limiting the scope for private sites

As discussed earlier in this chapter, high land costs are likely to deter and impede Gypsy and Traveller families developing their own sites. This is a problem that will grow considering the current political administration's Gypsy and Traveller accommodation policies have undergone a significant change of emphasis. At the time of writing it was understood, that once 'local and historic demand' for sites has been met, greater enforcement powers will be brought into play to curtail unauthorised developments (Avebury et al 2010; Cabinet Office, 2010). Activists and policy monitoring groups have reported their concern that the number of pitches local authorities identify as constituting 'local and historic demand' will be lower than the targets set through GTANA and Regional Spatial Strategies.

An additional concern over affordability and deliverability of sites relates to the potential that land identified as suitable for Traveller sites in development plans (even before permission is granted) will prove to be as valuable as land designated for housing and thus will remain outside the financial reach of many Gypsies and Travellers.

### ***Aspirations to Own Land and the Impact on Employment and Family Patterns***

In view of Gypsies' and Travellers' stated preference to own their own accommodation and the likelihood that opportunities to save and borrow money from other family members or purchase and develop low cost agricultural land are likely to become ever more restricted, we suggest that fundamental changes may need to occur in Traveller economic practices if there is to continue to be a market in home-ownership for traditionally accommodated families.

If a commitment is made to deliver credit to Gypsies and Travellers in a manner which permits equality with other communities e.g the potential to obtain a mortgage on undeveloped land, then to facilitate the purchase of such land, self-employed Travellers will need to provide proof of earnings over a two or three year period in the manner familiar to housed businessmen who wish to obtain a mortgage. In practice, this may mean that business people working in the Traveller economy will not be able to change and adapt to fluctuating employment opportunities as frequently as they have in the past as this would disrupt the continuity of employment/earnings required to establish credit-worthiness. It can therefore be argued that the requirements of bureaucracy and modern society may potentially stifle economic adaptation, innovation and versatility amongst the communities. However, as was noted in Chapter 4, there is a realism in Gypsy and Travellers understanding of their circumstances and the realisation of the need for change in order to survive has led to a movement towards more regulated work practices within the Traveller Economy which may in time provide sufficient grounding for more people working within this sector to establish access to loans and mortgages.

It should be noted however, that of the growing number of community members engaged in paid labour, those in low skilled and low waged labour will probably never be able to attain sufficient resources to secure credit for a large purchase such as land and even those employed in the relatively better paid third sector may have difficulties in securing sufficient credit for such purposes. The majority of the interviewees working in the third sector were based in the South East where the level of their salaries and/or status as sole or main household

income earner means that they are unlikely to ever be able to afford to step onto the highly inflated property ladder within the region whilst working in this employment sector. The survey of English Housing Preliminary Results 2007/08 has noted nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of those buying with a mortgage had a joint income of £30,000 or more and in the South-East the level of household income required for an average property is £65,290 (National Housing Federation, 2010). Wages in the low skilled sector for Gypsies and Travellers will be significantly below this pay level (typically at level of 'minimal wage' equating to less than £12,000 per year) and it is extremely rare in the community sector (other than for those in management level positions) to achieve a salary of £30,000 or more, effectively precluding land purchase in higher cost areas unless both members of a partnership work or family members utilise their bonding capital to enter into hard to administer and difficult to fund joint mortgage agreements.

These important accommodation and income generation trends are likely to require adaptation which will have impacts in many other areas of traditional Gypsy and Traveller life. For example, an emergent pattern is that more women within the community are likely to have to work in order to supplement household incomes and afford home/land ownership. In the past financially successful older Gypsies and Travellers had accrued wealth through the mechanism of saving then buying a family site, and from these premises (often including a self-built bungalow) developing and running a thriving business which they could then pass onto their family and with time move into semi or full retirement (often during their 50s) whilst enjoying the support of their family who would frequently co-reside on the land (see further Chapter Four). In the future, in contrast, Gypsies and Travellers and their children are likely to need to continue to work into and beyond 'mainstream' retirement age to finance site ownership and to have to consider entering private pension schemes to finance their retirement, a trend which reflects similar developments in wider society.

### *The Accommodation Industry*

There is a growing national shortage of Traveller sites

As has been emphasised continually within this report the shortage of site provision is a major driver of economic exclusion. In Niner's (2003) review it was estimated that a total of 3000-4500 new pitches (both transit and permanent) would be required to meet the then current need by 2008. To deliver these pitches in a timely manner would require the delivery of 600-900 plots per annum but, by 2005, there had been a net gain of only 140 pitches per annum – just 15-25 per cent of the need identified in Niner's study (Cemlyn et al 2009). Registered social landlords have also proved reluctant to engage in site development and have thus not been able to compensate for the slow pace of site delivery by local authorities.

Increasing site provision can create employment opportunities

However, (and see further the discussion on Community Land Trusts in Chapter 12) scope does exist for the communities themselves to provide new sites and in the process, to create new modes of employment for community members. Six of the interviewees were engaged in the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation 'industry' (1 site owner, 1 site warden, 1 director of a community interest company, 1 local authority accommodation manager and 2 retired Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers who had primarily dealt with accommodation issues). The following section of the report details some important aspects of their work experiences in the accommodation sector and assesses the potential for future developments within this field.

Support is needed for community members to deliver effective site management

One interviewee who has established an extremely well run series of private rented sites which are widely recognised as a model of good practice in service delivery, felt that more support and guidance in establishing private sites would be beneficial to assist others who wished to follow in her footsteps: .

*"I think some assistance in the early days when it came to permission and rent levels and all that that would have been helpful because we went down a long road, as we went along, the road got harder and longer. That's why I say if the Gypsies have proper advice it would be less expensive for them and less of an emotional rollercoaster ride and I think they deserve that. You need to read and write and the numeracy because of the campsite management and the costing and the budgeting and things like that. As long as you got a heart and you know your subject almost anybody could do it you know. It used to be a sideline in a field for me. When you get involved with something like supporting people you have to come up with the quality assessment framework which is quite a big document it has got everything in it from health and safety and its performance indicators and things like that and the law of course. You need to know more about it, you have to do risk assessments so it is much more [complicated] than it ever was" (G F 61-70).*

Attending courses leading to the Business and Technical Education Council (BTEC) Advanced Award in Site Management both provide useful ways for would-be sites managers to address a number of challenges they are likely to meet. Access to such information and training will also be of assistance to community members who wish to develop their knowledge of site management and enter into this work area either providing rented accommodation (if they access finance to support such a business) or as an employee of local authorities, private landlords or other providers of accommodation including a range of registered social landlords (RSLs). One of the local community groups that interviewed for the TEIP reported that they were keen to attract sponsorship for Gypsies and Travellers to attend this course as they felt that site management would be a growth area of employment for community members. In the past there has been considerable debate by policy practitioners and community members as to whether GRT site managers are the most appropriate people to undertake such work. Those opposed to the employment of GRT staff in this field refer to anecdotal tales of perceived authoritarian management regimes and exclusivity or factional allocation policies. Others have argued that sites are better managed by people who are fully familiar with and understand the culture of the residents (Niner, 2003 98). The interviewees who were involved in site management argued that their intimate knowledge of their community has enhanced their site management skills:

*"I work with the Traveller community and I know everything about them, the way they think and the way to approach them. You go in like a bulldog, they'll be a bulldog back. I know their needs because I have the same needs" (G F 41-50).*

Given the complexity of site management and the announcement that private and local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites will in due course be governed by the provisions of the Mobile Homes Act 1983 (Johnson et al 2010), there is a growing need for site managers to be fully aware of relevant legislation and precise procedures to ensure that they are able to deliver services in accordance with set regulations. There is evidence of Gypsies and Travellers growing ever more confident and comfortable in engaging with complex professional training as evidenced by the growing uptake of legal training in site management and planning matters. Not only does this take-up of specialist training ensure that community up-skilling and knowledge sharing can occur, but as good practice develops it should also reduce the incidence of unfair practices cited by Niner (2003) and anecdotal sources.

Indeed the scope for greater Gypsy and Traveller employment in the management of local authority/RSL sites could also be facilitated through the policy promotion of transferring assets from local authorities to community group management (CLG 2009). Thus, potentially local community or site residents' groups may be able to take over the management of local authority sites. To date only a limited number of residents' groups exist across the network of approximately 324 local authority sites. However, organisations such as the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain and Friends, Families and Travellers and the Travellers Aid Trust are supporting and developing the establishment of such groups through the provision of training, guidance and capacity building programmes.

#### Increasing opportunities exist for Gypsies and Travellers to develop commercial rented sites

One of the TEIP interviewees had made a first venture into site development and had formed a Community Interest Company to specialize in this field. Community Interest Companies (CICs) are limited companies, with specialised additional features, a model created for the purpose of supporting individuals or groups who wish to conduct a business or other activity



for community benefit, rather than purely for private commercial advantage. By establishing a "community interest test" and "asset lock", which ensures that the profits and assets of the CIC are dedicated to community purposes, and by the requirement for registration and monitoring of the company by a CIC Regulator, the essential nature of the CIC remains unchangeable to ensure that the Company delivers appropriate services to the community (CIC Website, 2010). The interviewee who had established an accommodation focused CIC reported that:

*"The business came out of necessity... we saw the sites weren't being run properly, we saw the sites weren't being built properly and costing ridiculous amounts of money for fairly low quality sites. We saw a way we could use our Gypsy and Traveller skills to do a better job. Most businesses you set up, it's official and very straightforward, but because we went through the Community Interest Company (CIC) route it was slightly more awkward to do a check on ourselves and show that it was for the community. Just to give you a little background on Community Interest Companies; say for instance I am working in my home town now and I'm building a site, and that site shows £80,000 profit, at least £60,000 of that profit is going to go back into the local community; We can't take bonuses out of it, we can't take dividends out of it. I think there're about 50 or maybe a 100 CIC companies in the UK and we were one of the first in the country to set up a CIC" (G M 31-40).*

Support in the establishment of this important venture was available from Future Builders, which is a Government supported investment fund which provided important initial start up capital. At the time of writing the Department for Communities and Local Government were exploring how enhanced social enterprise tools and mechanisms can be applied to site provision to drive both accommodation and employment related asset development.

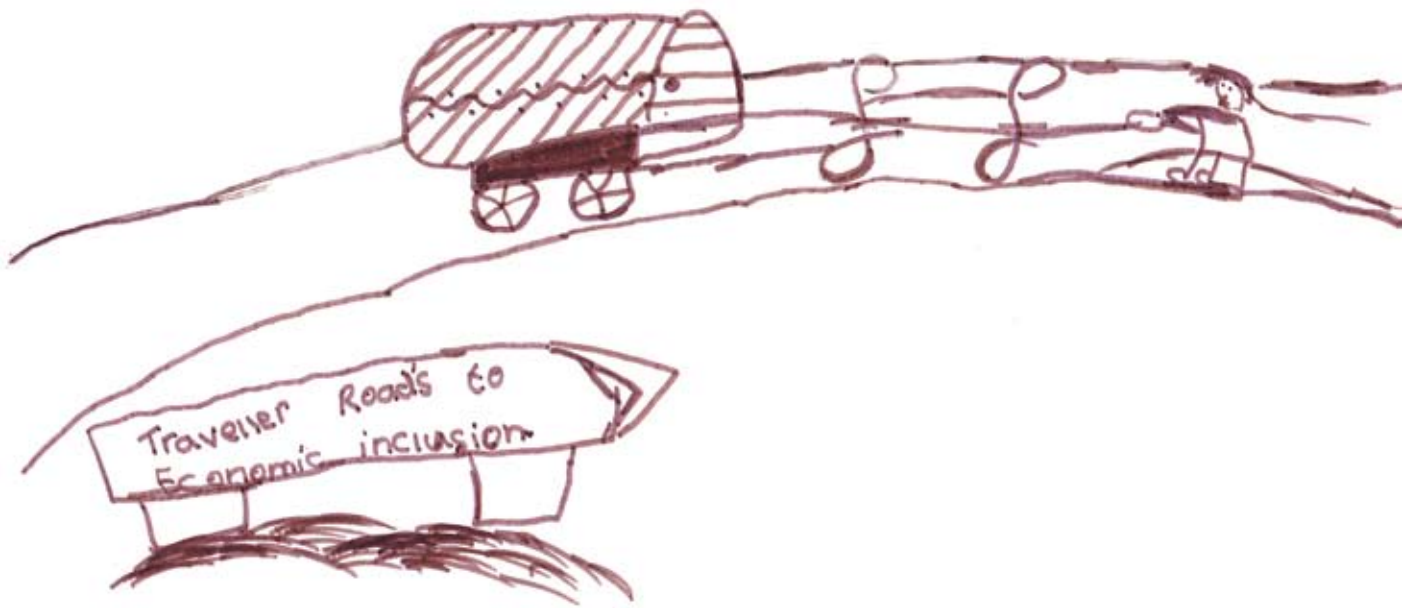
related employment opportunities may form an important strut to formulating strategies to support Gypsy and Traveller economic inclusion whilst engaging with current policy trends.

Critically however, in the light of diminished educational opportunities (see Chapter 9) and the lack of experience of many Gypsy and Traveller entrepreneurs who are best placed to work on site delivery, it is important to ensure that the requisite support, training and resources are made available by Central Government and community enterprise agencies. If this strategy can come to fruition, an increase in the supply of sites, in good locations and with good facilities will provide the foundation upon which many more families can achieve economic and social inclusion.

## Conclusion

Within this chapter the TEIP has identified some of the challenges to economic inclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers in different types of accommodation and outlined the ways in which access to credit and methods of developing and managing sites could build upon traditional employment models to enhance cultural acceptability. If these options are developed further, accommodation and

D.M



# **Chapter Nine**

*Education and Training*



## Chapter Nine

### Education and Training

#### Introduction

The European educationalist Liégeois, (writing in 1998) captured the importance of education to increasing the social inclusion of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers as well as enhancing their capacity for autonomy during a period of rapid social change.

*“Education increases personal autonomy, providing the tools for adapting to a changing environment and a means of self-defence from the forces of assimilation; it makes it possible to break out of the passive rut of welfarism to play an active role in cultural and political development”* (Liégeois, 1998, 19)

For interviewees who participated in the TEIP, their individualised degree of access to and participation in education, and their own and family attitudes towards formal education and training have been some of the most important predictors of their life chances, helping to shape their opportunities for economic inclusion. The TEIP project has also revealed examples of extraordinary achievement and success by Gypsies and Travellers who have achieved economic inclusion through overcoming significant disadvantage, which has been exacerbated by minimal access to formal education.

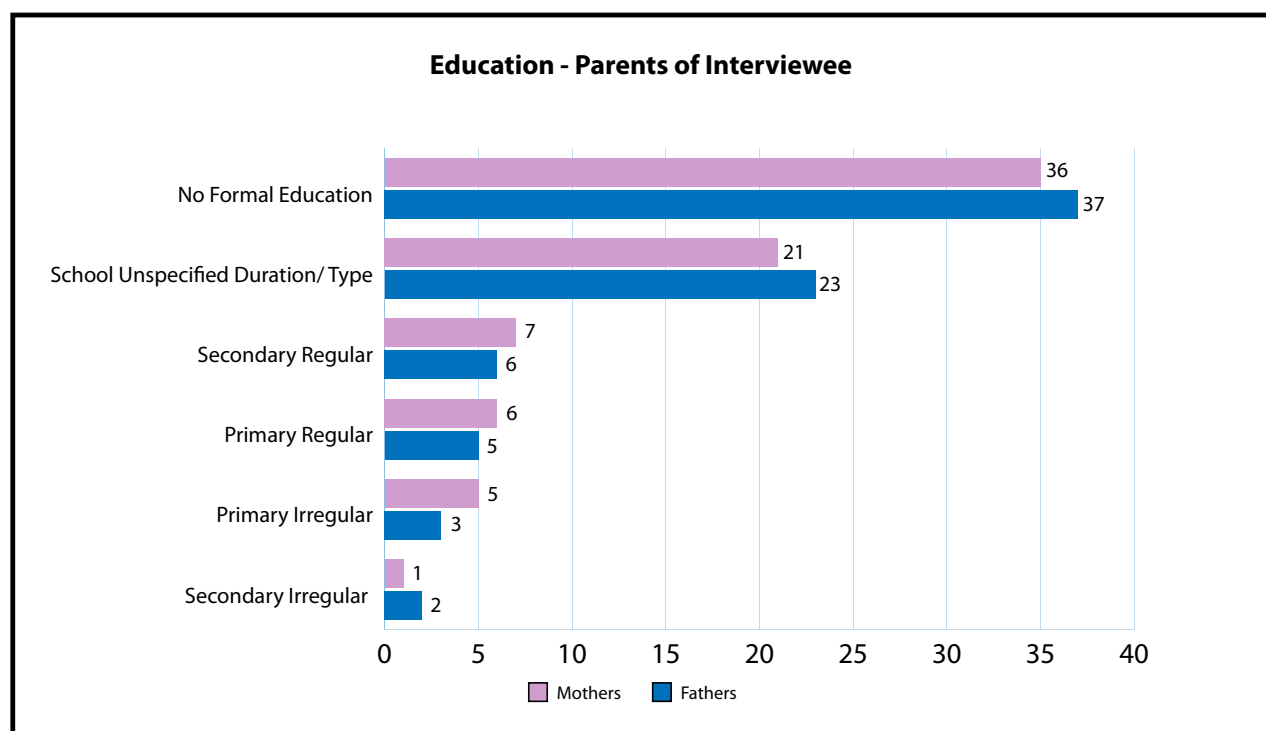
#### The Educational Status of Interviewees' Parents

It has long been accepted that parental socio-economic status is transmitted intergenerationally, with familial social mobility more likely to occur where parental educational status is relatively high. Thus, parental academic achievement/duration of education are frequently taken as a proxy marker for identifying and measuring the social inclusion and risk factors for children and young people (see further: Chowdry et.al., 2009). Accordingly, we have adopted this as one measure for exploring the 'baseline' from which TEIP participants have developed their current degree of financial and social inclusion/economic status.

status (even ignoring issues of frequent movement, poverty, experiences of racism etc) the attainments of the 'successful' Gypsies and Travellers interviewed for the TEIP are in the main exceptional. Given the high degree of educational exclusion experienced not only by the majority of respondents but also by their parents; without determination, flexibility and resilience, interviewees could have been expected to suffer a significantly greater level of exclusion on all domains that we found within the TEIP. We set out to explore the level of educational attainment of respondents' parents to enable consideration of how effective education and training have been in enabling social inclusion within our sample or whether inter-generational skills transmission (particularly for those engaged in the Traveller economy) have produced the most effective mechanisms for developing economic and social capital.

Table 19 demonstrates starkly the low levels of literacy/access to education experienced by the G/IT respondents' parents. Although respondents reported that their mothers had received more formal education than their fathers (as is common today within the community) a sharp decline can be observed in attendance at secondary school level, for both genders a pattern which is still prevalent (see further Cemlyn et. al., 2009) and overall relatively few interviewees had parents who had accessed school on a regular basis, a finding which is almost certainly related to the high degree of mobility/nomadism of parents recorded in Chapter 8. It should be noted that in a small number of cases interviewees were of mixed heritage and in all of these eight cases it was the parent from the settled community who had attended school for a longer period than had the their spouse.

It is noteworthy that low/non participation of parents in formal schooling was spread fairly evenly through the age bands, including the under 30 age category as 6 interviewees in this younger group had parents who were functionally illiterate or who had not been able to access any formal education. A slightly larger proportion (45% of the sample) had parents who had attended school either regularly or irregularly up to the secondary leaving age. None of the Gypsy or Irish Traveller interviewees' parents had been to university and this includes respondents who are of dual heritage and have one parent from a non-

**Tables 20 – Gypsy and Irish Traveller respondents: Parents' Educational Level**

\* Table 20 illustrates responses received from 76 out of the 86 G/IT interviewees who answered the question

Gypsy/Traveller background. Amongst the wider sample (including Roma/New Travellers), two New Traveller interviewees reported that their parents had received a university education.

### **Interviewee's Educational Participation/Achievement**

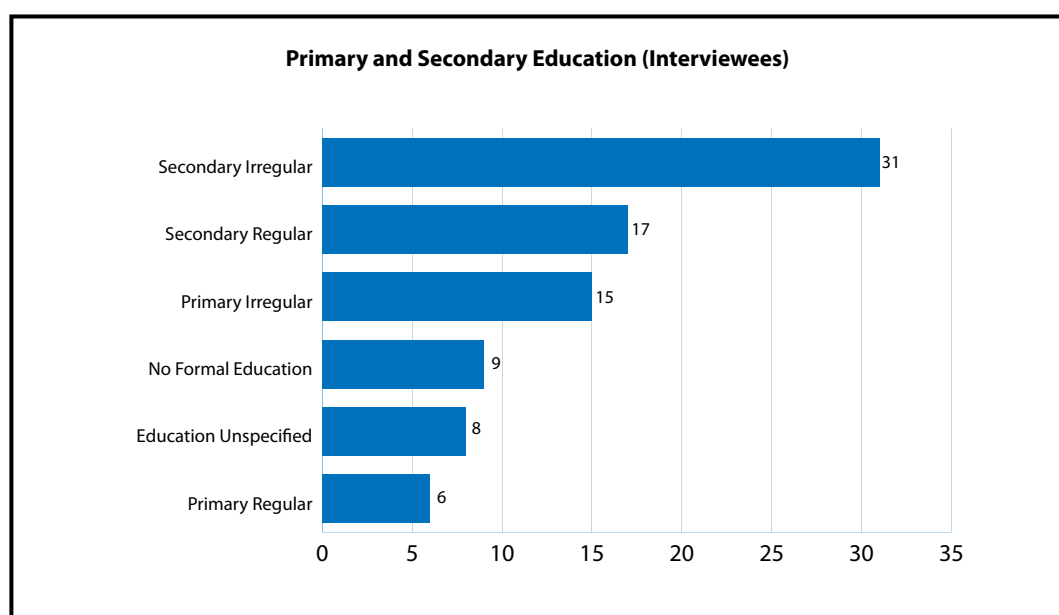
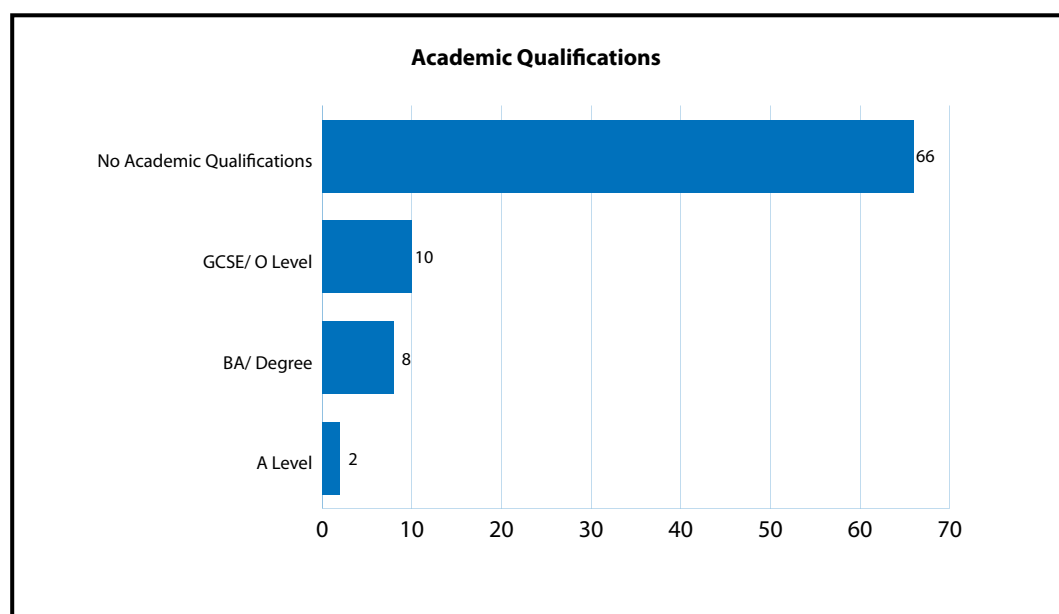
To enable us to explore whether the TEIP respondents had been able to receive a higher level of formal education than their parents we asked interviewees about their own educational experiences and possession of their highest qualifications. Tables 20 and 21 below demonstrate the findings from these questions, revealing a marked difference from length of 'parental' education data, with respondents' experiencing far greater access to education throughout their childhood and increased rates of attendance at secondary school, albeit often on an irregular basis. It may be posited that the increased tendency towards sedentarism and a transition to residence in housing is reflected in the findings of Table 20, particularly for respondents in younger age groups.

Perhaps the most striking element of Table 21 is the finding that 20 interviewees (23%) have achieved formal qualifications (e.g. GCSEs/A

Levels/ Degrees) a striking increase when compared with their parents' educational achievements.

Nine interviewees (10%) of the G/IT sample had received no formal education. Somewhat surprisingly this educational exclusion was also found amongst the youngest age band (aged under 21) where three interviewees had not attended school, but was most evident amongst the over forties who had grown up experiencing a more 'traditional' way of life which has largely passed away. Indeed four (5%) of the interviewees who were over seventy one years of age had only minimal schooling to the extent that TEIP categorised them as having no formal education. This oldest age-band included three interviewees who had attended school for exceptionally short periods, with the longest (total) amount of school experienced of any of these participants being four months of formal education. Eight interviewees (9%) indicated they had gone to school for some time period but had not provided more precise information on the extent of their educational engagement.

Of the remainder of the sample who were able to provide more precise information, six interviewees (7%) had only attended primary school and 17 interviewees (20%) had received both primary and secondary education,

**Table 21: Access to Education by duration and regularity of attendance by Gypsy and Irish****Table 22: Gypsy and Irish Traveller interviewee's highest academic qualifications**

attending their educational establishments on a regular basis. A further 46 respondents equating to 53% of the sample had attended education (both primary and secondary) on an irregular basis.

**Gypsy and Traveller customs and practices continue to discourage participation in school**

Amongst the younger interviewees (below the age of 40) a number of factors were identified which discouraged full educational participation. These issues were similar to those

outlined by the older generation, indicating the strength of cultural practices and outlooks that support the traditional Traveller Economy. In particular, respondents noted a strong cultural preference for boys to follow their fathers into work and learn skilled manual occupations and for girls to participate in domestic roles. These are trends that have been recorded elsewhere as limiting educational engagement (see further Wilkin et al 2009; GTANAs analysed within Appendix B; Cemlyn et. al. 2009; Greenfields, 2008; Bhopal & Myers, 2008; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003 ).

*"I loved school; I was top of the class all the way through [but] I left high school because we were moving and my Dad decided it was time I started working with him, he wanted to give me a practical trade" (G M 31-40).*

*"I went all the way through primary school and that was it. I took exams to go to grammar school and passed it and was due to go to the grammar school but my mum was pregnant at that time and the baby was very small and was seriously ill and my mum was in and out hospital so I had to stay at home look after the baby and I didn't have no choice" (G F 21-30).*

In contrast to these quotations from respondents who would have happily remained in education for longer, a number of participants (of all generations), had voluntarily limited participation in education, preferring, once their short term objectives of achieving basic reading and writing skills were achieved, to move into the Traveller economy and more 'culturally accepted' roles:

*"I enjoyed school I was quite good in some subjects in school. I learned to read and write that is the main thing and I wasn't too bad in maths. I got*

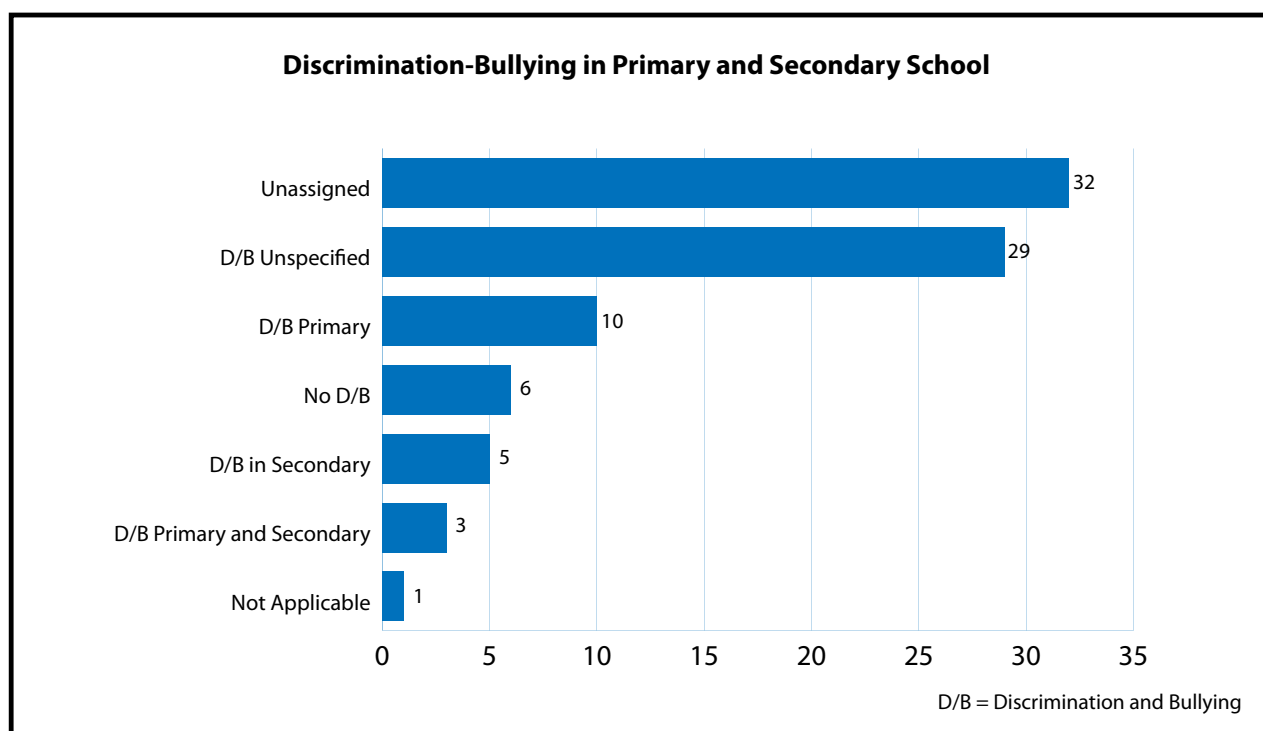
*what I wanted out of it. I wasn't planning to go on to college or doing any fascinating things in school. I just wanted to learn how to read and write and that was that" (IT M 21-30).*

It has been well documented that high levels of racist bullying and experiences of education related discrimination operate as a barrier to remaining in education for members of Gypsy and Traveller communities (Cemlyn, et. al., 2009; Clark & Greenfields, 2006). Parents in some studies (e.g. Richardson, et. al., 2007) have reported that fear of their children being bullied or knowledge of incidents where relatives or other community members' children have been the victims of violent racist incidents have proved a catalyst for removing their children from education.

Racist bullying acts as a barrier to participation in school with parents often removing children from schools when this occurs

In response to a broad question about negative and positive experiences of school, 47 interviewees in the G/IT sample (55 percent of this sub-sample) experienced bullying and discrimination during their time in education. Such bullying ranged from 'name calling' (e.g 'Pikey'; 'Dirty Gypsy') to intensely violent

**Table 23 – Gypsy and Irish traveller's respondents' experiences of school-based bullying/discrimination**



enacted bullying and racism and actual physical segregation from other children. This figure is relatively low when compared with findings from a number of GTANAs which regularly report that in excess of 80% of Gypsies and Travellers refer to having experienced school-based bullying. This compares to almost one-third of Black and Asian adults who experienced racialised discrimination at school, college or university and is starkly contrasted with findings which demonstrate only one percent of White people have experienced racist bullying (BBC, 2002). The high incidence of racism in schools has been remarked in other studies (Wilkin et al, 2009).

References to racism and bullying as a negative feature of school featured strongly in interviews undertaken with every age band within the TEIP G/IT sample. Other negative experiences of education included dissatisfaction with the curriculum (which was perceived of as being irrelevant to many Gypsies and Travellers as it was not practically oriented enough), to not being with other Travellers (leaving respondents feeling vulnerable and unsupported). Four interviewees cited cultural differences from other pupils which were so great as to lead to a sense of alienation within the educational system.

*"Secondary school that wasn't good at all. I didn't get on with them at all. It's very hard because sometimes they just asked 'What you are going to be when you grow up?' and I would go 'I'm going to go out travelling, meet new Travellers.' and they'd ask 'Do you want to be a doctor?' [and I would say] 'For what like?' It's hard for Travellers in school because a lot of the non-Travellers they want a big future and a big career" (IT F 21-30).*

*[respondent who left school at 14] "... every 14 year old doesn't want to go to school but I had people, young children coming up and talking about drugs and things like that, it wasn't something I was brought up in to. Despite what my mum and dad said because they didn't want me to leave I left at my own choice because that just wasn't something that I wanted to do" (G F below the age of 21).*

Bullying and racism occurred frequently in the school experiences of interviewees of all ages. In common with the narratives recounted by older interviewees, younger TEIP participants reported that bullying could manifest itself in acts of violence or extreme intimidation. Such

incidents understandably had a profound effect on a number of the interviewees:

*"Secondary wasn't positive at all. I didn't have any problems with my friends but the majority of the school kids wouldn't accept me as what I was. They wouldn't accept my race they wouldn't accept anything about the culture or anything. Very close friends were fine with it but quite a few of the teachers didn't accept it which I found really hard. I didn't make a big thing about it I was just trying to do my education but you could actually tell who had a problem with it. My thing was just trying to stay away from certain teachers so I would be trying to be placed in different classes and to do different things. One of my sports' teachers was particularly racist.... I got really, really badly bullied in secondary school because of my race. My parents actually know the full extent of it - so as soon as they realised the full extent I was pulled out when I was 14". (G M 21-30).*

### Responses to Racism

#### Experiences of racism leads to avoidance strategies and conflict

Typically, interviewees responded to racism within school settings by utilising avoidance strategies, e.g. failing to attend school or by responding to physical challenges and intimidation with direct physical (violent) responses. For some participants (of both genders), acting in a submissive manner to racism or abuse would be to go against Gypsy and Traveller cultural practices and outlooks which discouraged passively submitting to bullying and instead emphasised the importance of upholding individual and community dignity through fighting back (Levinson, 2000). In other cases participants reported that other family members would come to the school to confront bullies. Understandably, although regrettably, physical responses to racist bullying would often lead to an escalation in conflict and the imposition of sanctions from the school. It is therefore understandable that the combination of widespread racism against Gypsies and Travellers and a cultural response which emphasises a determined (physical) response has led to a grossly inflated rate of Gyps/ Traveller pupils experiencing exclusion from school (Bhopal & Myers, 2008; Levinson, 2009).



*"You've got to retaliate because if you don't do anything people just think they can walk over you. I used to get into loads of fights when I was in school. I retaliate more verbally now"* (G F under 21).

### Positive Experiences in School

Some Gypsies and Travellers prefer being educated in 'segregated' groups with fellow community members where a supportive 'critical mass' is attained

Somewhat alarmingly only a quarter of G/IT interviewees felt that their time in school had included positive experiences. Of these respondents a third (7 interviewees) identified that being with other Gypsies and Travellers was the most positive element and that being with other Traveller pupils in school increased their confidence and also their sense of security, a finding that has been evidenced elsewhere (Knipe et al 2005; Greenfields, 2008).

*"I did go to school when we were settling in a house over here. I've done all primary school but the main reason why I went to primary school was because there were 20 to 25 Traveller children in the school and we were all brothers, sisters, cousins and the school was good for Travellers. When I left there we moved out off this area and we moved into a different area and I only did 3 days in that school because there were no other Travellers there, we were the only Travellers there. At secondary school I did one term. Every day after the school my brothers would pick me up whatever, there were gang fights and big gangs outside the school. I was taken out of there and I was put into a learning support scheme with other Travellers half a day every day. It was easier for us as well because it was only in the morning time in the school and then I went to college when I was 16"* (IT F 21-30).

Several interviewees indicated that certain schools with more experience of dealing with Gypsies and Travellers were more able to provide secure and supportive learning environments (see further Derrington & Kendall, 2004; Wilkin et. al., 2009). In contrast, schools could also be a focus for community tensions (for example when unauthorised planning developments took place in an area), however, some schools were able to rapidly reverse such community discord and gain the trust and support of Traveller parents. One Headteacher

as well as robustly discouraging a petition some parents had organised against admitting Traveller children to the school wrote a letter of support for a planning hearing:

*"The headmaster told us that he believed every child mattered and ours mattered exactly the same as the next one. He wrote a lovely letter for us to go to court with and then we found out about the petition and how all the other mothers and fathers backed out of it after the first week of meeting our children. Our headmaster he went to the Parish Council meeting and he told the Parish Council if he could get 150 other children just like ours he would take them all into school tomorrow morning. The school has been an awful lot of help"* (ST F 31-40).

### Impact on Work

A lack of formal education can mean having to make limited employment choices: between working in the Traveller Economy and unskilled waged work.

Low participation rates and levels of achievement in formal education and a continued emphasis on short term goals, such as basic literacy coupled with an emphasis on participation in in-family training and the Traveller Economy are significant factors in explaining why a large proportion of interviewees were engaged in the traditional Traveller Economy or undertaking low waged unskilled labour (Chapters 4 and 5). However, the low educational achievement of Gypsies and Travellers in school has the result of making it harder (even for those working in the Traveller Economy) to develop and maintain their own businesses or to progress to better rewarded and skilled positions if working in the waged sector, no doubt contributing to the cycle of economic exclusion experienced by many community members.

Despite strong cultural influences which support 'conservative' adaptive behaviours (Acton, 1994), attitudes towards engagement in formal education were also altering amongst some interviewees, leading to changing employment patterns. Ten interviewees in the G/IT sample (12%) had remained in school and had gained GCSEs albeit only two participants had achieved the 'gold standard' of 5+ A\*-C grades. Overwhelmingly however, the interviewees who had gained qualifications did

so by returning to education after experiencing a gap between school and further education. In total 66 interviewees (76%) of the sample had no academic qualifications in contrast to the nine percent of the 'mainstream' population without qualifications (ONS, 2009). Even when contrasting the educational attainment of the sample to other especially excluded minorities we see gross disproportionality in terms of educational attainment. Whilst approximately 50% of the Bangladeshi community hold no qualifications (White, 2002), it has to be considered that the TEIP sample are those members of the G/IT communities who are more economically included, implying that illiteracy and lack of formal qualifications may be higher amongst the Gypsy and Traveller population as a whole. The TEIP survey found amongst the older age range interviewed a lack of any formal qualifications. This was most evident in the forty plus age band, a finding common to the mainstream population where (for comparison) 30% of the whole population of all ages (Census, 2001) hold no qualifications, predominantly concentrated in older age groups so that 15-20% of working age adults in their 50s have no qualifications; 11% in their 40s and 8% of younger age groups (see further 'The Poverty Site' website).

Amongst TEIP respondents those who had achieved the highest levels of academic success were generally those of mixed heritage who had grown up (and still resided) in housing (see further below).

### Curricular Reform

Participants report a preference for vocational and experiential learning

Amongst the TEIP interviewees there was clear evidence of support for curricular reform so that the curriculum offered to Gypsies and Travellers would better reflect the cultural aspirations of their communities. It was felt that young people would be more inclined to engage with education if learning experiences and interactive learning opportunities were delivered in a supportive environment. This reflects the findings of other studies which have also found a strong preference for vocational and experiential learning amongst Gypsies and Travellers (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008; Wilkin et al., 2009; Greenfields, 2008):

*"I think work experience to get youngsters to be doing work as well as just reading and writing would be good. I think that would benefit people to see how to work and learn a trade. I think that would be a benefit for everybody in the wider community to be able to learn skills quite early and being able to achieve directly what they want to do instead of being in a setting where you are almost pushed into a box to be able to do the type of work they think you are fit for" (G M 21-30).*

*"I think training for things would be good because they need to get qualifications nowadays pretty much for everything they ask about your qualifications. Some young boys and girls when they are starting out in school they don't want to be there because it is too structured for them because they're used to being outside a lot and if you put them in a room it's a problem. I think it should be more practical than just a little bit of paper and more practical. I think more people would go to college to get qualifications. I understand that we have got to do the paperwork as well but the way I think is well if I can do it with my hands that should bring me half way there but there is more paperwork than practical work" (G F 21-30).*

Critics of the national curriculum have argued that it has reduced the curricular flexibility of schools and reduced teachers' capacity to introduce practical and experimental learning, instead having to focus on exam results. However, curricular reform announced by the DCSF in 2007 should offer the opportunity to scale back the national curriculum and free up to a quarter of teaching time to offer more innovative learning experiences that are less prescriptive (Hansard, col 1321, 10th July, 2007; see also TES, 13th July 2007 [editorial]). Such reform measures may provide scope for learning experiences more in tune with Gypsy and Traveller cultural preferences and we would recommend are adopted where a relatively large cohort of Gypsy and Traveller pupils are attending a school. Extended work experience allows pupils above 14 to gain practical work experience and combine this with school and is another educational path that may assist in maintaining educational participation for Gypsy and Traveller pupils. One interviewee who had been bullied and withdrawn from school had experience of such flexible work experience:

*"I was supposed to be going into college but they couldn't fit me in so what I did was help local businesses by actually going around and learning*

*about different things through the business so I found that more rewarding to gain that experience" (G M 21-30).*

None of the interviewees below the age of 21 had had the opportunity to undertake work experience which both acted as a barrier to experiential learning and meant that in many cases they were unaware of employment options which could be made available to them. This lack of engagement is due partly to some having left school prior to Year 10 when such opportunities arise, and because the application of the work experience policy is variable nationally. Traveller Education Services have also reported that it is difficult to match male Gypsies and Travellers with work experiences that they would enjoy. This is partly due to the fact that local authorities are hesitant to place pupils in work environments where there may be an element of danger, thus ruling out activities such as construction and tree surgery that may be more appealing to Gypsy and Traveller boys than clerical and retail work (ITMB 2008).

In relation to post 16 learning/training the TEIP found that a number of interviewees supported the idea of a system of accreditation for prior informal learning and skills development:

*"I think there should be more of a way to get the qualifications for Travellers, because there's so many Travellers out there who got the best skills in the world, but got nothing on paper. If they've got nothing on paper they struggle with insurance, they struggle with everything. I think if there was a way somebody could do an assessment on them to say let's see you at work, let's see what you can do, helping them with the health and safety aspect of it which is very important, and then see their skills, see what they can do and say right if that's your quality of work we think you're qualified enough to do this job and give them some certification so they can take it forward. Not many Travellers need help working but we need help making the work formal" (G M 31-40).*

### **Educational Support Strategies**

Traveller Education Services provide important support

Some references were made in the interviews to the value of specialist learning support and

in-school interventions by Traveller Education Services (TES) although reference to this was not as common as may have been expected:

*"Different schools varied some of them I enjoyed. When you got like the Gypsy Support Officer there you found less racism because they used to stop it but in other schools there was a lot of bullying going on. It is just something what you have to deal with when you are in school" (G F under 21).*

There is some support for separate educational provision

In contrast to the wider policy emphasis on 'mainstreaming' of educational services, a number of interviewees expressed a preference for greater use of targeted support that was culturally specific to their community.

*"I think it would be good if we had something which goes on the sites like a bus, like the mobile library and if you wanted to get into like journalism you could access, they would have laptops on there so you haven't got to go anywhere" (G M 31-40).*

*"Work centres for learning how to do it for Travellers and not other kinds of people so there wouldn't be much racist stuff going on because Travellers would not go if there was" (IT M 21-30).*

In Ireland Traveller-focused work training centres have been established and there have been calls for such centres to be set up in the UK (Bowers, 2004), but the debates have been intense as to whether this is institutionalising segregation and educational disadvantage or providing a cultural specific remedy to exclusion (Save the Children, 2001). The responses from the interviewees below capture both the positives and negatives of such a 'separatist' strategy, whilst illustrating the stigmatisation that can be caused by well-meant educational separation:

*"..in Wales they had a unit for Traveller kids. It is like a little school for Traveller kids and they are all going there and they are becoming lawyers and stuff like that so it does help. However, it is also bad in a way because they are coming away from the non-Travellers which they obviously need to mix with otherwise the racism is never going to stop" (G F under 21).*

*"I was 14 when I left school. I went to primary school and I really enjoyed it. It was lovely then*



*I went to secondary school which was good [as an educational establishment] but it wasn't good because there was a lot of racism because of who we were, we ended up going to another school. It was only for Travellers, it was like we were educated in a way that wasn't education. We had our own little school in a shed and the other children were allowed to play outside at proper playtime hours and we wouldn't be allowed to mix with them. In a way it didn't really bother us but now as you are older you realise it was a big thing because it's like we were excluded, we weren't allowed to mix with them because we were Travellers. Don't get me wrong the man that used to educate us, he was a lovely man he did everything for us, the best way he could. He wasn't from our community. He was a settled man" (IT M 31-40).*

Connexions services only offer limited support which is appropriate for GRT

Three of the interviewees in the under-21 age band had received Connexions support. The Connexions service provides access to advisors to support young people with their career options as well as identifying relevant curriculum choices and educational options which can help students to achieve their desired work ambitions (see further Chapter 11).

*"I was looking for a job, I wasn't really getting anywhere because obviously they're going to pick the GCSE people over us so I was talking to one of the Connexions' advisers and they said about a training program that helps you get into employment. So I started that doing my NVQ in Business Administration and I got a placement here and it just pretty much went on from there then" (G F under 21).*

Only two interviewees in the older age bands reported receiving careers guidance, although this may be reflective in part of early school leaving ages minimizing their contact with the service. Given the high numbers of GRT pupils not attending secondary school or leaving education early, opportunities for contact with careers advice are limited. Some indications exist that low take-up may also be a reflection of the variability of this service and perceived irrelevance for Gypsies and Travellers, as in some areas there is little targeted work with this minority and no in-service training to raise staff awareness of the community's needs. Given that most Gypsy and Traveller parents have limited experience of further education or the world of work beyond the Traveller Economy, such

careers guidance may have a key role in raising the economic inclusion of this community if it is possible to develop appropriate engagement strategies.

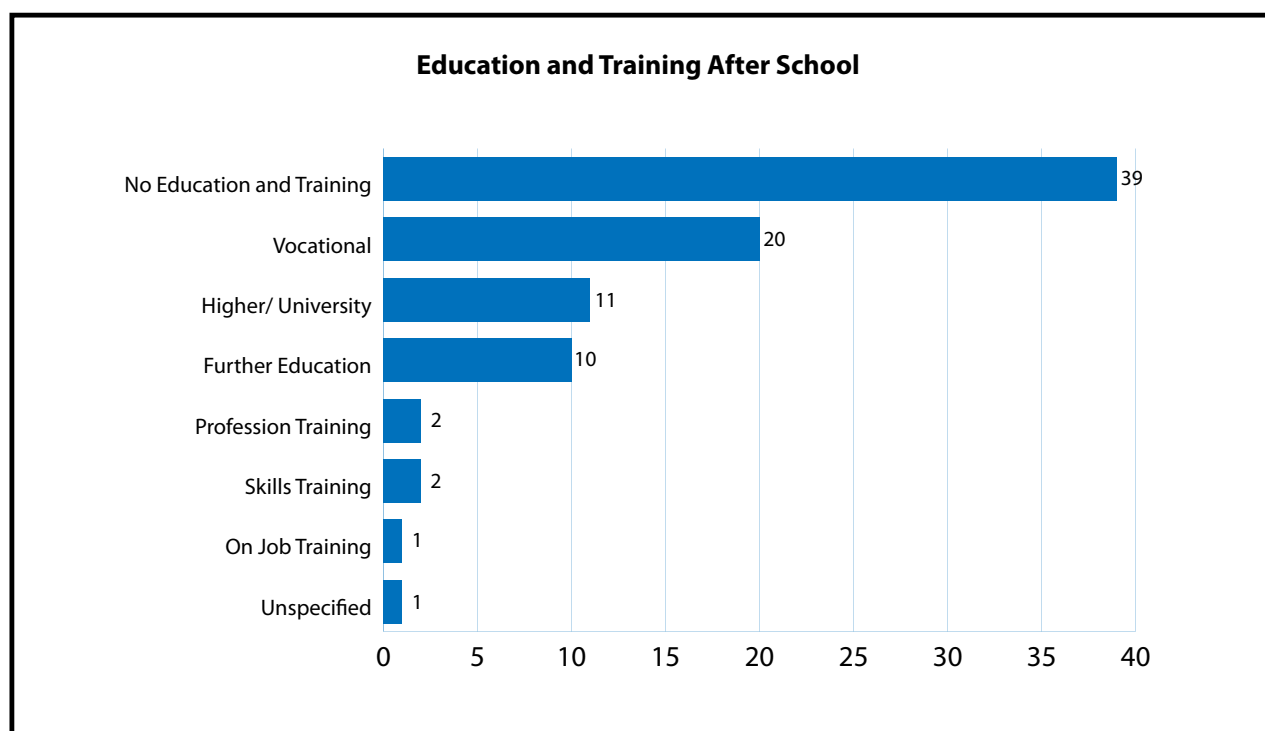
College literacy courses are effective in enhancing economic inclusion

A number of the interviewees had elected to opt for home tutoring, also known as 'Elective Home Education' (EHE), rather than send their children to school. Whilst this strategy does minimize the possibilities of bullying and assists in retaining cultural continuity (see further Chapter 1) it has the significant disadvantage of ensuring educational separation and reducing opportunities for inter-cultural contact.

It has been estimated that between 2000 and 2004 that there was a 40 percent increase in EHE amongst Gypsies and Travellers (Ivatts, 2006). However, it has been argued that without adequate educational support for young people who are educated at home, and with the educational challenges experienced by many parents who are unable to assist with formal educational curriculum support, Home Education may essentially focus around engagement with the Traveller economy rather than wider educational issues. The issue of a cultural preference for educational segregation is complex and problematic with ramifications for community engagement and good relations between distinct ethnic groups. It is interesting to note that a number of adults interviewed by TEIP who wished to improve their literacy skills preferred to undertake lessons with a private tutor rather than engage with other learners in a college based literacy course. Such a reluctance to attend college based courses appeared to stem from concerns about learning alongside members of the wider community who may behave in a racist manner or mock the Gypsy/Traveller learner's difficulties (see further Greenfields, 2008). However, many interviewees who did attend college for the purposes of enhancing their literacy found it to be a positive experience.

### Returning to Education

**Table 24 – Gypsy and Irish Traveller participants’ post-school education and training**



There was a relatively high uptake of further education in the TEIP sample

As illustrated by Table 23 (above) approximately one third of interviewees in the G/IT sample had undertaken some form of further/vocational education or training whilst a further 11 interviewees (13%) had attended University. A further 45% of the sample (39 interviewees) had received no additional education or training after they had left school.

The process of disengagement from education and perhaps limited contact with Connexions and careers services meant that only a low number of interviewees (6 people) had transferred to further education directly from school whilst all the others had had a gap in education. The most popular courses for G/ITs were practically oriented NVQs undertaken by 7 interviewees (8%) of the sample. All except one of the interviewee's who took this course were below the age of thirty. A further 6 interviewees/(7%) had taken specialist advanced vocational courses such as Higher National Diplomas(HND)/BTech or City and Guilds qualifications. 3 other interviewees were (at the time of interview) undertaking a

university module in community development. Other participants had attended short term vocational courses, whilst seven respondents had undertaken literacy and numeracy classes.

Where respondents had moved into further education or training this transition had been facilitated by Traveller Education Services, employers or benefits agencies (e.g. through the New Deal) which recognised that the interviewee's lack of skills was a serious impediment to entering into or developing in their work.

A number of respondents reported that their employers had supported and encouraged them to return to education and thus increase their skills. Active skills development also took place in some interviewees' workplaces. The following respondent was encouraged by a community group to take up a range of courses:

*"I left school when I was 14... I started work at 16 and I've been with them [community group] for nearly 2.5 years. I've done a lot of training. I'm a qualified first aider, First Aid at Work, Emergency First Aid. I've done things on Participation and Budgets and at the beginning of the year I finished an NVQ in Business and Admin and I won*



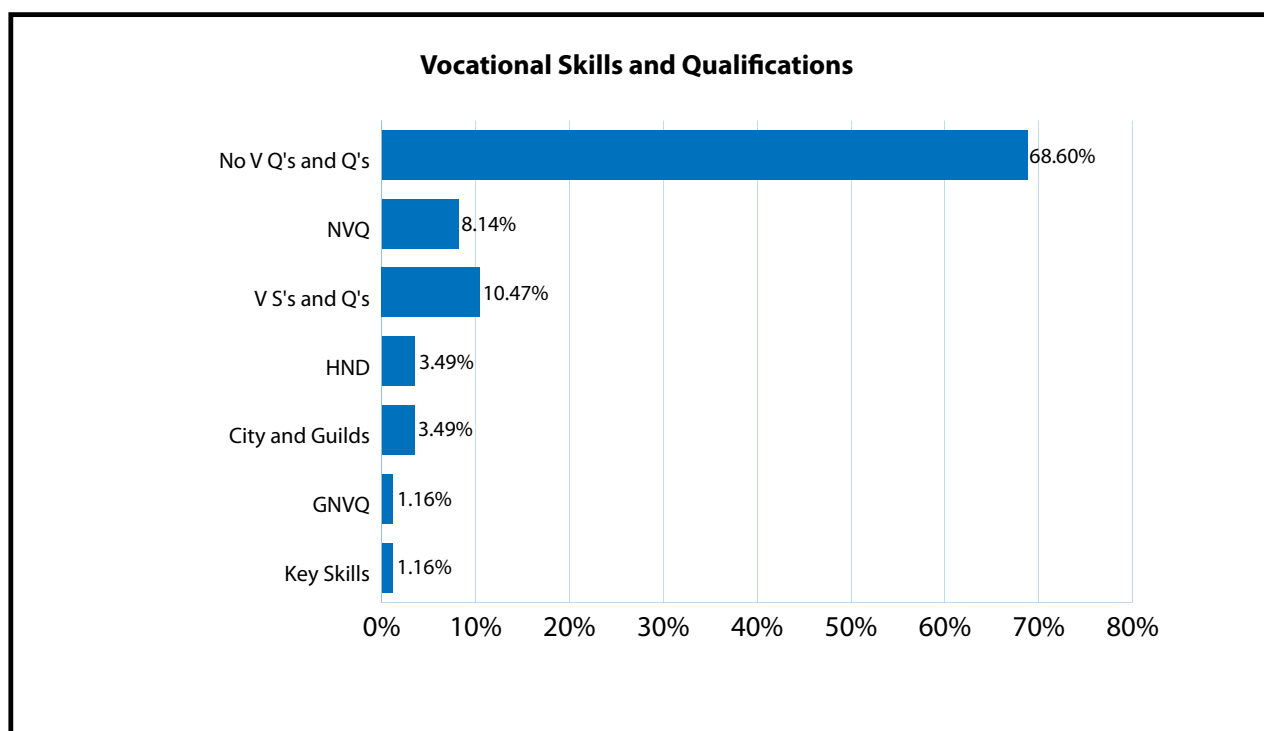
*Apprentice of the Year for that and I've just started out. I'm doing an NVQ Level 2 in Management and Team Leading.... I will do a lot more training in the future because at the end of the day it is just one of those things, the training never stops. It always looks good on the CV, it just helps you in whatever you are doing the more training you do"* (G F under 21).

Several interviewees working in community groups (either as waged employees or volunteers) made positive reference to the specialist course 'Training the Trainers' which is delivered by G/IT community members and project managed by the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group. Apart from this very

specialist course, most of those involved in community groups had improved their skills by on-job training whilst working within their organisations. The TEIP suggests that there may be scope for a specifically designed course to assist the growing number of Gypsy and Traveller staff working in NGOs or targeted statutory services to develop skills in governance, fund raising, outreach and advocacy enabling them to bridge the skills gaps and eventually progress to the management of projects.

### Experiences of Further Education

**Table 25 – Vocational Skills and Qualifications undertaken by Gypsy and Irish Traveller participants**



Colleges can provide a more secure learning environment than schools

Despite some reluctance by a number of interviewees to initially enter further education establishments, once they had begun to attend, they expressed positive comments about the more secure and mature learning environment that college offered when compared to school. They also expressed satisfaction with the wide range of courses that were available (including literacy and vocational training options):

*"My workplace helped me, they pay for it [college course] and they give me time off work to go to college. People there are mixed, you get younger and older people as well. I have friends from there as well. I thought at the beginning 'I'm the only Traveller I'm different' but its better if you just go and face it to see what they say. They might not be all bad people, it is just the way how you speak to them really. If you speak to them nicely they speak to you nicely" (G F 21-30).*

Attending college could still present major challenges for interviewees and some were not able to progress with or complete further education courses because they could not afford the tuition fees or had to halt their studies. Furthermore, home environments were not always conducive places to carry out the required course work as a result of cultural expectations or overcrowding:

*"The college was quite hard because I had two lives. All the work I needed to do I had to do at the college because I was the eldest amongst the girls so when I was at home I had to look after everyone else and help mum do things like cleaning up. I had a difficult time at college people thought I was a bit of a workaholic because I had to finish all the college work when I was there because I couldn't really do anything at home because my brothers were a nightmare" (G F 41-50).*

In common with concerns raised about the relevance of the school curriculum some interviewees expressed their doubts about whether further education courses were practical enough for their needs, although these worries were significantly less marked than in relation to the school curriculum. Despite enthusiastic attendance to gain or enhance practical skills some of the interviewees had failed to understand the importance of gaining qualifications and certificates to evidence their

knowledge and had thus failed to work to obtain high level exam results or had left prior to the exam:

*"I liked going to the college I liked being in the college in general it was alright. I thought I would be making flowers more than I did. It was quite difficult with the writing I didn't really do well in writing and they made you do a lot of portfolios and stuff. I can read and write but if they tell you to make a bouquet I could make it but when I had to write it down that was a problem for me" (G F under 21).*

A number of Traveller Education Services have expressed concern about the Educational Maintenance Grant which provided payments for low income students to attend college and fear that abolishing the grant could have an adverse impact on Gypsy and Traveller participation in further education.

### Higher Education

Gypsies and Travellers have limited participation in higher education

Eight interviewees in the G/IT sample (9%) had obtained higher education degrees/diplomas. Six of these respondents were Gypsies and the remaining two were Irish Travellers of mixed heritage. Only two of these highly qualified interviewees were male. In the wider Gypsy Roma Traveller sample, one Roma had received a higher education (out of a sub-sample of four Roma) although in sharp contrast three out of five New Travellers (all female) had degrees, with two of these respondents having proceeded into higher education at the age of 18. All but four recipients of higher education (whole sample of G/IT, Roma and New Travellers) had re-entered education and attended university as mature students.

Higher education can present cultural challenges for many Gypsies and Travellers

Entry into higher education could present a series of cultural challenges for Gypsies and Travellers, primarily because of the more formalised and abstract nature of learning experiences. For some interviewees the fact they were the first, not just in their family but also in their extended kin network, to enter university introduced an element of strangeness to the experience:

*"I've done the NVQ 2 in Childcare in college. I went to university and we've done Community Development but that was very weird at times. We used to go in and everyone that was there has done college and done so many years in university and we got in there!. We didn't have all these high grades, I didn't do my GCSEs. We just went in there but it was hard in there" (IT F 21-30).*

Going to university could create family tensions but also raised issues about the degree of independence that might be afforded to young women. Concerns about whether higher education might conflict with traditional gender roles and expectations and lead to changes and departure from traditional forms of behavior could be a cause of heightened conflict:

*"My dad had a lot of opposition from the family [to daughters going to university] so it was very difficult for him to justify why he allowed us to go away from home. We all had to take a deep breath when he allowed my middle sister to go to university but really how it worked was he used to collect her on a Friday evening and go down from Darlington four hours in a van picked her up on Friday evening and brought her back over the weekend and went back on Sunday night and that happened all the way through for 3 years of the degree. So in a way it was quite managed - it was like a careful eye [was kept] on all of us. I think my younger sister did International Finance, Spanish and Accounting. My younger sister she went to university in Wales and it was very difficult for my dad because she didn't come home every weekend but even he learnt through me and my sister that just because we were educated it didn't mean that we weren't going to follow the rules. We did follow the rules we didn't have any boyfriends, we didn't do anything that would have brought any dishonour on the family and we still follow the rules..... Travellers' concerns about the children being educated by the system doesn't necessarily mean that you are going to leave the culture this is what they are always frightened about, you know if you get educated." (G F 41-50).*

#### Further and higher education can be life changing for Gypsies and Travellers

Interviewees who had entered into further and higher education reported how the experience could be profoundly life changing; leading the way to new horizons and aspirations and acting as a 'stepping stone' to greater educational participation and achievement:

*"I had my children young in my twenties. With*

*the support of my husband I went and did basic O levels. I did English, Psychology and Sociology. I just fancied doing it I didn't know where it would end, I fancied doing them even though I hadn't got any formal education I don't know where it came from but I've always had very good word power, I've always had very good communication skills. I went into it, I did adult education and I was lucky because when I went into it there were very few adults attending, there was probably 10 and we ended up probably 3 so it went to kind of one-to-one tutoring. It introduced you to books and writing and language. It just fascinated me, intrigued me and I said 'Whoa I like this'. I did those 3 exams and I came out with two Bs and a C" (G F 51-60).*

This particular interviewee, (married to a non-Gypsy/Traveller) who had only received limited formal schooling, subsequently undertook a university course and secured a professional position.

The Education and Skills Act (2008) which will raise the duration of compulsory education until eighteen is likely to have implications for Gypsy and Traveller engagement with formal education. Whilst evidence from the TEIP suggests there may be great interest in post 16 education if it is perceived of as relevant, some education providers we interviewed were hesitant about how realistic it was to compel participation for a group which in many cases had dropped out of education prior to the current school leaving age of sixteen and who were frequently disengaged from academic processes. It was felt by education professionals that well resourced and targeted educational initiatives would be needed to make any inroads to resistance to remaining in formal education.

#### Evidence of progressive attitudes towards higher education amongst some Gypsies and Travellers

In addition to the TEIP findings other studies have noted some evidence of increasingly progressive attitudes towards higher education, coupled with a growing perception that such participation does not pose a cultural threat. Whilst this shift in perception is to be greatly welcomed, for the moment however, such views may still be those of a minority of Gypsy and Traveller adults (Derrington, 2006; Levinson and Sparkes, 2006)

The following interviewee who had worked within the Traveller Economy whilst a

young man, became a mature student and subsequently gained a number of post graduate qualifications which led to his becoming an academic. He revealed the family disputes and struggle to overcome poor educational attainment that for some interviewees must take place before they can enter into higher education:

*"I suppose for me the positive and negative was my mum and dad had different ideas on education. My dad was up for me to go to work with him labouring but my mum wanted me to go to school. I don't know where it came from but I did do well at school and learnt to read and write easily. There was a tug of war about where I would end up. My mother managed to keep me in until I was 16 but I missed a lot in the last 2 years. I scraped a couple of O' levels and that was a miracle. I was certainly the first on my father's side to finish school. I remember a lot of arguments between my mum and dad on this, my dad held traditional views about working in the family business and did not see the value of paper qualifications and never needed to as some of the family did well out of scrap and construction. He wanted me to make money like he did"* (G M 41-50).

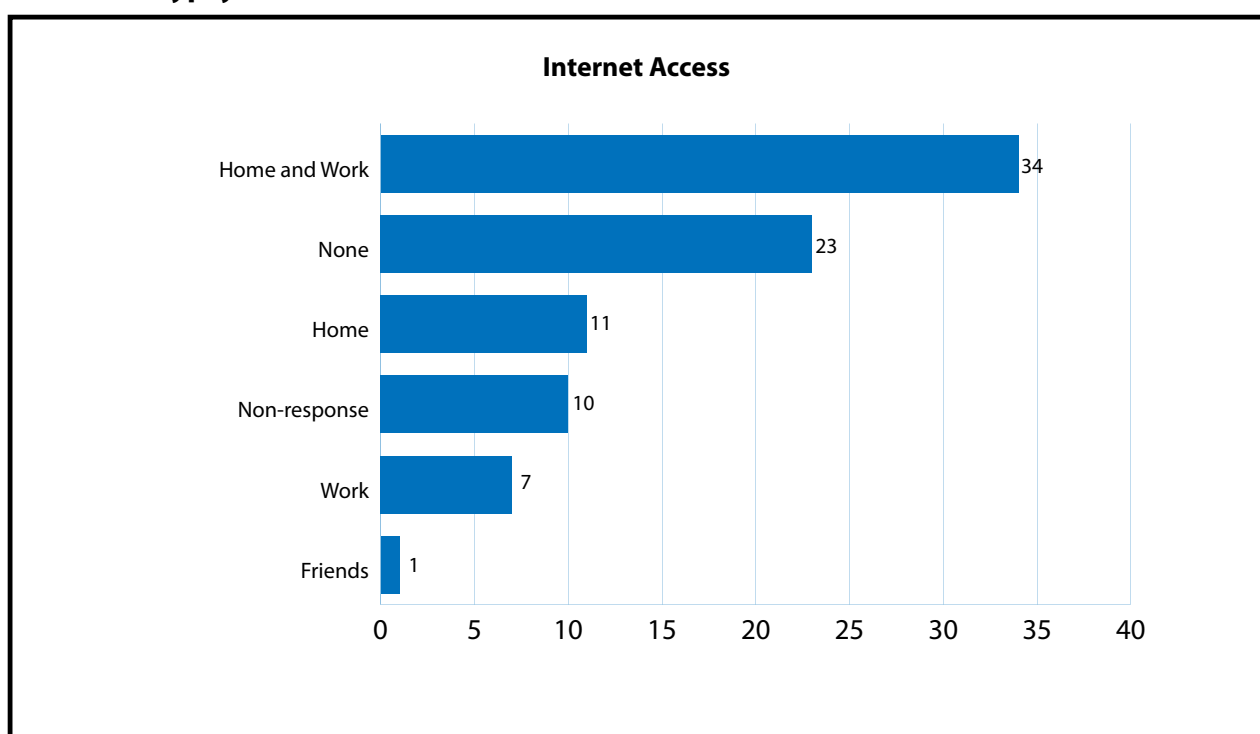
In contrast, and perhaps reflective of the attitudes of the relatively 'elite' group of interviewees who are economically successful, approximately 10 percent of G/IT respondents stated that they had children who were currently in university, had attended higher educational establishments or who were preparing to go; suggesting that there could be a significant increase in the number of university graduates within the community in the near future.

This development of a critical mass of well-educated Gypsies and Travellers may have important implications for perceptions of the value of education if these graduates retain close links to their communities and develop into role models and advocates who challenge negative stereotypes in 'home' and external settings.

In Ireland the potential offered by the development of a graduate pool has been recognised and in order to try and encourage such students to retain links with their community, instead of moving away into 'mainstream' occupations and communities and with the intent of promoting entry into

higher education, a network has been formed 'Supporting Travellers in

*"I'd like to see some fellow students from the Gypsy and Traveller community come together but I also think that if you put them into a room together they would be the most powerful group and a role model"* (G M 21-30).

**E-Inclusion****Table 26 – Gypsy and Irish Travellers with access to the Internet**

#### There is growing use of the internet amongst Gypsies and Travellers

53 interviewees in the Gypsy and Irish Traveller sample/(61%) stated that they had access to the internet, 34 interviewees/(40%) at home and work with a smaller number indicating that they had internet access at home (11 interviewees/13%) or work only (7 interviewees/8%). A small number of respondents noted that they accessed the internet at friend's homes, in libraries or at projects where they undertook voluntary work. In contrast, 75% of Roma had access to the internet at both home and work and 80% of New Traveller interviewees could access the internet either at home or work.

Amongst the Gypsy and Irish Traveller sample, internet access was most common amongst the under 40s. 12 interviewees (14% of the sample) said they had access to the internet but needed family members to operate it for them:

*"Useless! [level of personal skill at internet use]. I don't use it in the building work, but for the trading business and I have a man that comes to do that, and my daughter writes on the Facebook and all that, she makes me bribe her and holds me to ransom if I need to communicate with anybody" (G M 41-50).*

Once again, low levels of IT skills (even where the internet was available at home) were most common in the older (over 40) age bands. Of the 27% of the Gypsy and Irish Traveller sample (23 respondents) who explicitly stated that they did not have any internet access only 8 interviewees were under 40 with the rest being in older age-bands.

Whilst the internet was increasingly being used as a work tool by individuals working in the community sector or mainstream services there was also limited (but growing) engagement with IT by those working in the Traveller Economy. Table 27 below demonstrates the main purposes for which G/IT respondents use IT.

For younger people IT was also used as a social tool via links such as Facebook which was playing a key role in maintaining and enhancing bonding capital and social networks amongst younger Gypsies and Travellers:

*"I practically live on my email. I have a couple of websites built. We get an average of between 50 and 150 emails a day, for work. The internet is paramount. On the side I use Ebay a lot. Believe it or not we use Facebook for work; Facebook's probably one of the best tools we've ever used for work. A lot of people use it to gossip and talk*



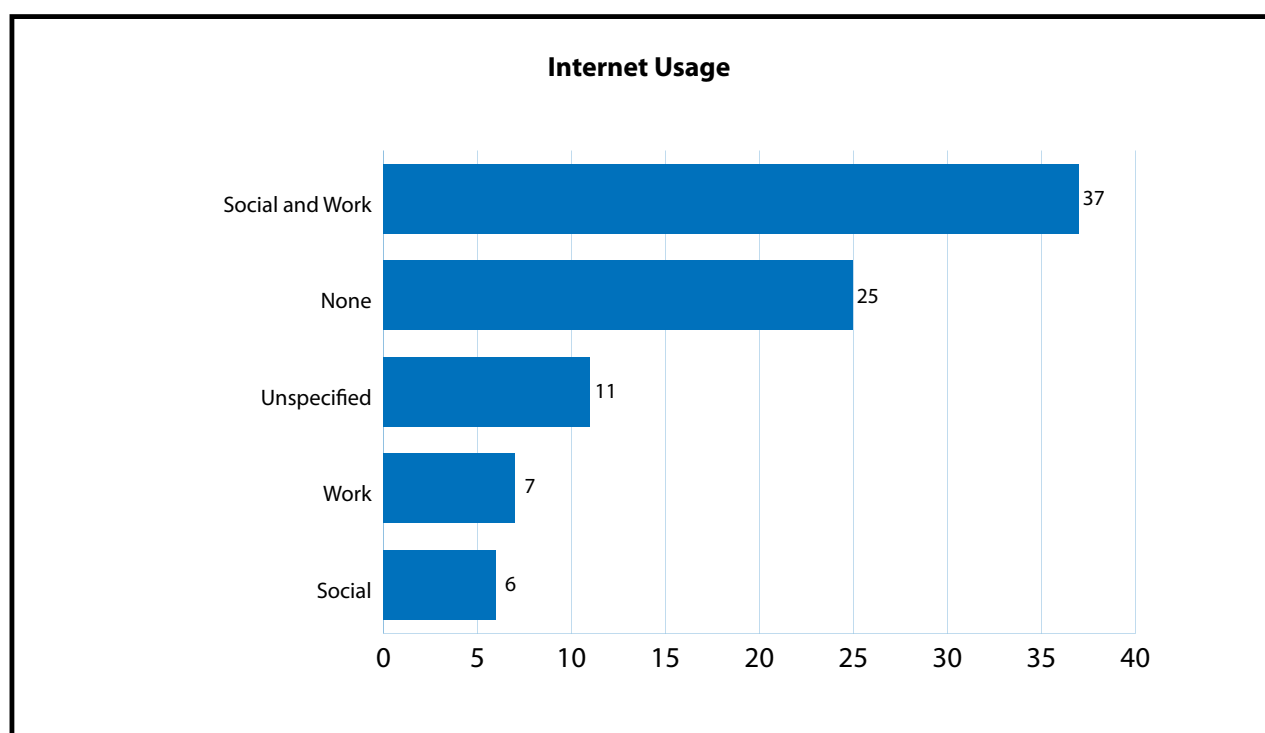
*about John and Jane and whoever they want to talk about. If you use it in the right context Facebook is probably the most powerful tool on the internet and we get a lot of work through it. You pick and choose who you talk to, you have certain people who are friends and they see what you're doing and they see to a degree a little bit of your personal life and they see that you're human and they see all the good things that are being done because you've got to put yourself on there in a good light and it works wonders" (G M 31-40).*

Policies by the Government to promote e-inclusion, such as providing free laptops for low income families with school aged children (Home Access) have the potential to have a profound impact on the lives of many Gypsy and Traveller families. Amongst many TES (supported by some charities working with

Gypsies and Travellers) there is a growing trend to seek to engage with young people through the provision of e-learning and the provision and encouragement of use of lap-tops to access education whilst a family is travelling or where a family has opted for home education of children.

The emphasis on e-inclusion and the development of top-down IT inclusion strategies are particularly important considering there is significant and increasing evidence that the internet can play an important part in supporting disadvantaged groups to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and to learn about employment and training opportunities (Connecting Communities, Tackling Exclusion, 2003).

**Table 27 Purposes of internet usage: Gypsy and Irish Traveller**



### **Predicting the Future: Changing Attitudes towards Formal Education**

There is growing support for mainstream education within the TEIP sample...

There was a growing perception amongst all interviewees that there would need to be greater engagement with formal education amongst Gypsies and Travellers if the communities are to thrive. Thirty one of the interviewees with children and adolescent offspring strongly supported the idea of their children remaining in the education system and gaining some form of academic qualifications. Approximately one third of this group made reference to their hopes that their children would access higher education or that in fact these children were already participating in higher education. TEIP interviewees argued that community members having a greater level of education could open up more opportunities including success in work and confidence.

*"Other Travellers they don't go to schools they do self-employment they go out and they are on scrap metal or trees but pretty soon you are not going to be able to do that. I want them to have the best education what they can. Because obviously it is coming up now, you need the education to get anywhere in life. I don't want them to have to struggle trying to find a job because obviously they [employers] look at the piece of paper and if the person never went to school they automatically pinpoint them as a bad person and unreliable" (G F under 21).*

*"...the ones that go to school seem to be brighter and they are not frightened to go into offices and they are not frightened to go to the bank and they are a bit more aware of what is going on. I think the children that suffer that don't go to school and are pulled out of school and sent to work with dad don't always get that chance. I do think education is the answer to it all" (G F 51-60).*

Accordingly, despite the 'conservative' tendencies of some Gypsies and Travellers (see further Chapter 1) amongst the TEIP sample, there was significant support for greater educational participation which was identified with the development of new economic activities. Such engagement was seen as enabling the take up of occupations not normally associated with Gypsies and Travellers (outside of the Traveller economy). For many, such a move to new fields of economic

endeavour was not necessarily felt to be a negation of Gypsy and Traveller identity, but instead an opportunity for the creation of positive role models and community leaders in the future:

*"For me a traditional Traveller route is to do what's best for your family, that's how we were brought up, that's a traditional route, to make sure your family is sorted and they get what's needed. If mainstream education is what's needed then that's what I want. Whatever I can give to make sure my kids get a better future; as an example my 14 year old girl she is doing hair and beauty, but she is also doing triple science; so she's keeping her options open on both sides. My boy is a computer man, he's 9 years old and he spends half his life developing web-sites, he's 9 years old and he can do Flash and Macro-media and all this stuff I can't even pronounce never mind do, he understands Java-script and everything, kid's a little geek. But if that will make him a living and make him self-sufficient then for me that's a traditional Travellers route. There's no such thing as a traditional Traveller's job because you do what needs to be done" (G M 31-40).*

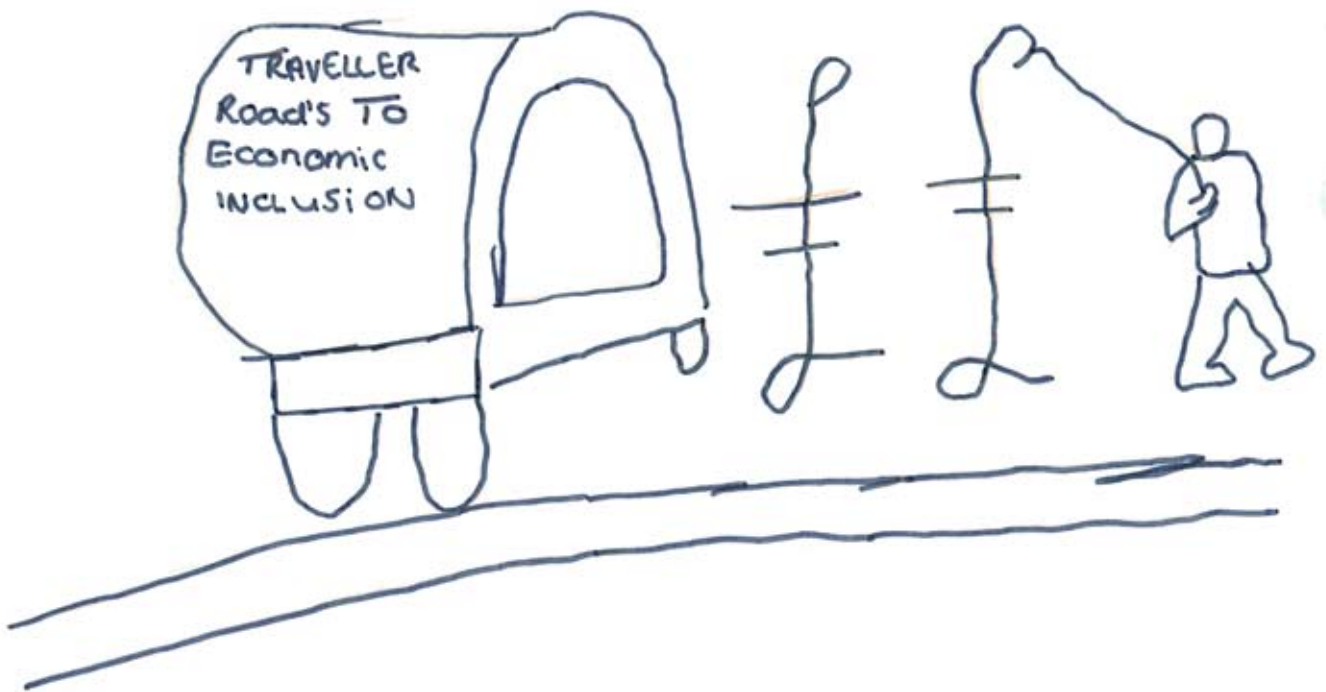
*"I want my children to be a doctor or a lawyer or something like that but at the same time say to people that 'I'm a Gypsy and I've achieved this, I might be a Gypsy or my mother is a Gypsy and I've lived the Gypsies' life, so I'm brainy enough to become a lawyer or a policeman'. I would love for my children to really, really achieve something. I think the Traveller life has come to a stage that they have to survive and you cannot knock on doors anymore and it's going to get harder and harder" (G F 31-40).*

### **Conclusion**

.....but national statistics suggest there is still cause to be concerned about national educational participation rates.

Despite this extremely encouraging evidence of growing positive attitudes towards participation in formal education; a word of caution needs to be issued. National statistics pertaining to school/educational participation for Gypsies and Travellers paints a different picture, suggesting greater retrenchment of Gypsy and Traveller educational exclusion and indicating that the TEIP sample is not fully representative of national trends. On the core issues of access, attendance and attainment the DCSF estimates

that the overall secondary enrolment rate of Gypsies and Travellers averaged just over 60% in a series of study areas and participation at Key Stage Four (GCSEs) was only 47% of children registered on school census data as being from Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller backgrounds. More alarmingly, the numbers of GRT children who were not enrolled in school were calculated to have increased from 10,000 children in 1996, to 12,000 in 2003 (DfES, 2003, 8). However, if this trend has continued in later years it may also be linked to the increase in 'home education' which, despite all of the relevant concerns (Ivatts, 2006) raised about a prevailing focus on the 'Traveller economy' within home education, may potentially enable children to be academically supported through IT and access to e-learning. In support of the findings from the TEIP, some studies have noted emerging positive views towards education amongst Gypsies and Travellers although have noted that cautious approval may be tempered by negative experiences and fears of cultural erosion (Wilkin et al 2009). Thus, despite a growing recognition of the value of formal education, until other factors which discourage increased rates of attendance in school, (e.g the high levels of racism in schools identified within the TEIP survey) are addressed, engaging Gypsies and Travellers with mainstream education may still be a relatively slow and delicate process.



# ***Chapter Ten***

***Social Capital and Community Relations***

## Chapter Ten

### Social Capital and Community Relations

As outlined in chapter one the concept of social capital refers to the nature and composition of social networks and the extent and manner in which an individual or family can use these resources to link them to a community or area. In earlier chapters we have explored the ways in which access to networks and the use of both bonding (inter-community) and bridging (intra-community) capitals impacts on the economic inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers. In this chapter we turn to GRT relations with the wider community, and in particular, how use of bridging capital can assist in developing employment opportunities as well as expanding intercultural understanding. Critically, we also explore interviewees' perceptions of their relationships with members of other communities in work settings and examine how Gypsies and Travellers feel about their employment conditions and how they are treated in work by their colleagues. In this way, we consider the importance of social capital/ community engagement in determining general well-being, support and coping mechanisms for employees located outside of the 'Traveller economy' and their traditional networks of support.

#### Social Capital, Gypsies and Travellers

*"Social capital ..... refers to features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions."*  
(Putnam, 664, 1995)

Putnam provides a useful exploration of the two 'types' of social capital, defining 'bonding' capital as inward-looking and used to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. Forms of capital/networks which are outward-looking and incorporate people from diverse backgrounds are those he defines as containing 'bridging' elements (Putnam, 2000, 22-3).

Both of these concepts are helpful to understanding the ways in which capitals are used by Gypsies and Travellers. The core essence of 'bonding' capital comprises the use of some or all of the following elements: trust; reciprocity/mutuality; common norms; intense, shared social networks; shared channels of

information; shared commitment/belonging to a community/identity group.

Coleman summarises the benefits of bonding social capital thus:

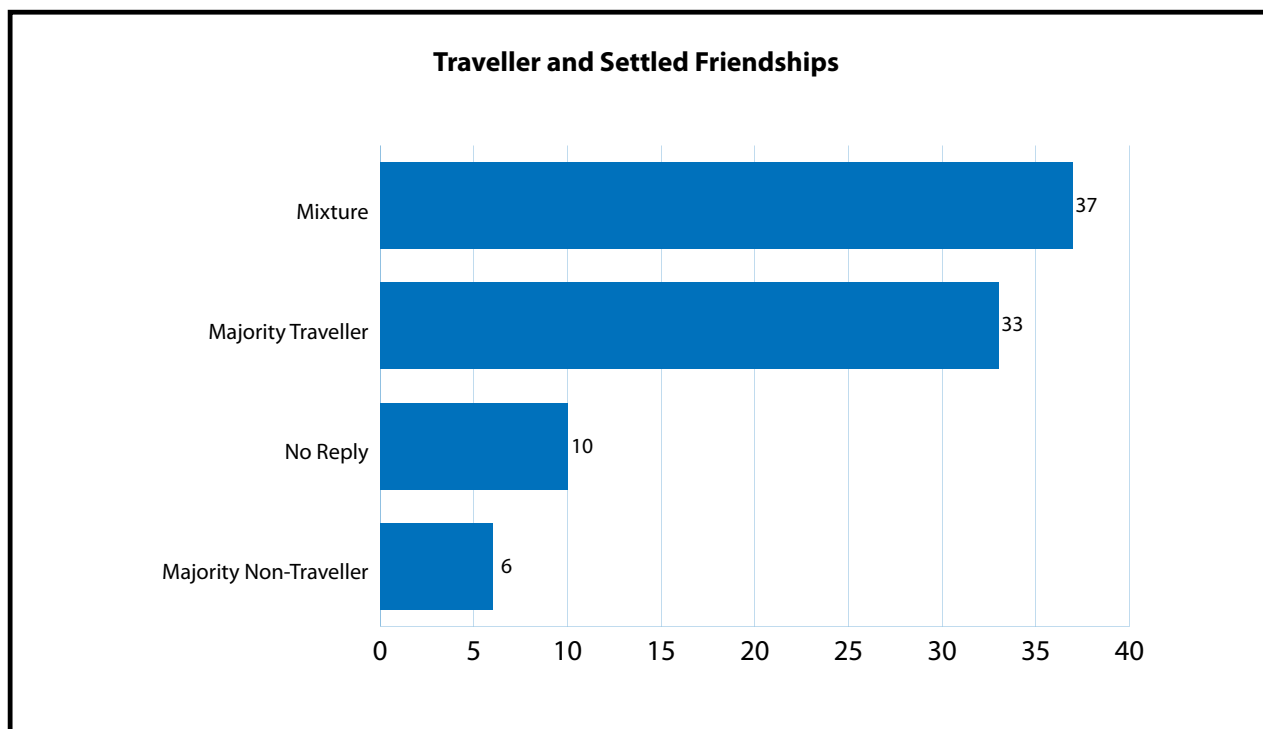
*"Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence. ... Social capital is embodied in the relations among persons. [a] group whose members manifest trustworthiness and place extensive trust in one another will be able to accomplish more than a comparable group lacking that trustworthiness and trust."*  
(Coleman, 334, 1990)

The intense social bonding of Gypsies and Travellers is probably a central factor that has assisted in the transmission of cultural traditions within this community and also the preservation of their distinct identity. Despite being one of Britain's oldest minorities and hence exposed to centuries rather than decades (as is the case with more recent minority group arrivals) of exposure to and interaction with mainstream culture, Gypsies and Travellers have preserved strong forms of identity. We therefore set out to examine to what extent bonding capital dominates social relationships within Gypsy and Traveller communities within the participants of the TEIP survey or whether changing employment and social circumstances has led to a greater emphasis on 'bridging' capital and relationships.

Table 28 presents a relatively unusual picture when contrasted with the findings from the (very limited) research which explores inter-community relations. In the few studies which have explored inter-cultural relationships and friendship patterns amongst Gypsies and Travellers, (Greenfields and Smith, 2010; qualitative data included in Wigfield, et. al. 2010 'good relations' study on behalf of the EHRC) respondents have overwhelmingly preferred to socialise with members of their own communities, tending to state that "we don't mix much outside" "only spend time with our own" (see Greenfields and Smith, 2010 for further discussion)

In contrast, the TEIP found amongst the G/IT sample 33 interviewees (43%) operated predominantly within 'bonded' social groups whilst a larger sub-set of 37 interviewees (48%)



**Table 28 Gypsy and Irish Travellers friendship patterns**

had wider and more diverse social networks. This chapter seeks to outline why and in what context these variations occur, the ways in which bonding and bridging networks operate and the impact these types of social capital can have on economic activities and social inclusion.

### **Family Relationships**

Gypsies and Travellers in the interview sample placed a strong emphasis on family networks, with individuals who experienced both bridging and bonding capital reporting frequent contact with relatives or (frequently) living in close proximity to them. Often interviewees reported occupying the same site or being concentrated in the same part of a housing estate as their relatives (see further Greenfields & Smith, 2010 for a discussion on social housing exchange as a way of strengthening bonding capital and neighbourhood ties). Family networks stretched far beyond the basic nuclear family and encompassed close ties with more distant extended family members:

*"We've got our own place and somewhere to live. I've got my family around me which is the most important thing to me. I've got a sister and her children and her husband, my mother, my father before he died, cousin next door and I think that is*

*what helps makes a Traveller family work because togetherness is important you know" (G F 51-60).*

A very large proportion of the interviewees mentioned that attending family events such as weddings, funerals and christenings created important opportunities to meet those in their social networks. For some, sites were not only a place to live but also places of social interaction and spaces where business deals could be struck and information exchanged. The latter factor may explain (in part) why the 'Traveller Economy' was strongest amongst site residents or where sites existed in close proximity to housed Gypsy/Traveller networks (see further Chapter Four):

*"Well I've just been to friends to pick up these tools - so work is a big point of people coming together and other events like funerals, weddings and just having a yard here. Someone will just come in the yard, you know, it's usually busier than this, we only had one visitor while you were here, but it's usually busier" (G M 41-50).*

### **'Bonding' and 'Bridging' Networks: determining factors**

Family 'bonds' are critical but some Gypsies and Travellers also have 'bridging' (inter-community) social capital

As has been noted above, not all the interviewees emphasized the supremacy of bonding social capital; with some respondents having much wider and more ethnically mixed networks, and other interviewees appearing to be more isolated, having little contact with either their own community or 'outside' groups. The growth of bridging capital and wider social networks may in part be attributable to the shortage of sites and subsequent increase in numbers of Gypsies and Travellers who have moved into housing. For many community members geographic dispersal makes it significantly harder to maintain close links with kin and ethnic group members, a factor implicated in high rates of social isolation and depression amongst some women in particular (Richardson et al., 2007; Van Cleemput et al., 2007; Greenfields and Smith, 2010).

*"You don't get bored living on a site and I love the closeness. A lot of people in the last ten years have gone into houses, the majority they don't feel safe. There is no community there within a house. I know a woman she always comes down to the market she is a Gypsy. She ended up going into a flat and she absolutely hated it. She said we should stay out as long as we can" (IT F 41-50).*

Fear and mistrust of 'outside' communities creates social distancing

The TEIP found (in common with other studies, see further Cemlyn et al 2009) that the strengthening of close kin and ethnic group ties amongst Gypsies and Travellers were in part responsive to a sense of fear, and mistrust of the wider community who, (with some justification given experiences of racism in school and other settings) it was felt, were often hostile to Gypsies and Travellers:

*"I've always been part of a big massive family and always had support, with lots of friends and family altogether and not being isolated. If you know that everything outside of your camp is completely different to what you are living in and all the people on the outside life they all have this thing where they think that you are all bad and they never give anyone a chance to show that there is good and bad. It is not surprising then that we*

*keep close" (G F 41-50).*

Distancing could also be prompted by moral fears of the settled community (see further Chapter nine for a discussion on concerns over 'dilution' of culture through access to education) which could be perceived of as polluting and corrupting. Okely (1983) has argued that historical notions of cultural pollution and maintenance of traditional rituals (for example the washing of clothes in particular ways) had encouraged Gypsies and Travellers to retain strong cultural barriers and 'distance' between the community and wider populations. Whilst Acton (1997) may be correct in identifying a decline in such traditional behaviours we would suggest that fear of other communities both in the sense of avoiding physical danger and racism and retaining cultural separateness continue to act as a driver for maintaining social distancing. A point illustrated in the quotation below:

*"We were having a lot of trouble with the kids, they were Travellers and growing up in a settled community, the Traveller ways were coming out of them. It's very hard to keep them always like you have in the past and not to be drinking and smoking and whatever. It is very hard to keep them that way when others are robbing and stealing and get them into trouble - when you are living on a council estate and hanging out with non-Travellers. I'm not saying the non-Travellers gets them to do that, but there's no understanding of the Traveller life" (IT 21-30 F).*

A number of interviewees described how they related to and felt around non-Travellers. Some respondents described a general 'uncomfortableness' whilst others sought to avoid such contact and to remain purely within their own community and culture:

*"I don't really mix with a lot of non-Traveller people. I don't really mix with other people just with Travellers. I talk to anybody but I don't feel comfortable with non-Travellers" (IT F under the age of 21).*

Spatial segregation/site locations leads to social distancing

As we have considered in relation to accommodation provision in Chapter 8, segregated locations of habitation, (both isolated rural sites and local authority sites occupying marginal space), act as further barriers to engagement with wider

communities. Thus such spatial marginalisation, when combined with intense bonding social capital are factors that exacerbate and accentuate separation from the 'mainstream'.

Interestingly, within the survey a majority of those respondents who exhibited the strongest attachment to bonding capital were women. We posit that greater pressure may, as a consequence of traditional gender roles, be placed on women to restrict their interaction with the wider community, and this, coupled with the oft-noted tendency for women to act as "transmitters of culture" may extenuate a preference to intra-community social involvement. An additional key finding, is that three quarters of those displaying 'bonding' capital traits within the TEIP survey were located on sites, supporting indications from GTANAs that families and individuals resident in housing are more likely to engage with 'non' Traveller economy employment, access education and training and enter into marriages/relationships/ friendships with people from other communities as close-knit bonds become loosened and they are exposed to alternative ways of life.

Thus, whilst the geographical location of sites (and lowered tendency for non-Travellers to visit sites for social purposes see further Cemlyn et. al., 2009) as well as the proximity of family members are probably important factors in cementing bonding social capital the disadvantage of segregation and 'parallel communities' are also likely to accrue to residents. As identified within earlier chapters, the strength of bonding social capital and cultural/social expectations of other site residents (see Putnam, 1993 for a discussion on peer pressure in 'bonded' communities and Chapter 5 for interviewee's narrative on leaving sites after moving to new employment sectors) may also explain to a large extent why many interviewees have closely followed traditional economic activities, as they have been able to access in-family training, employment opportunities and information of work opportunities in a way which would not be possible if they were undertaking other forms of work or living at another location (see further Chapter Four).

Differences in the nature of social networks (bonded or bridged) showed remarkable continuity across age bands. Within all generations in the G/IT sample there was an

almost equal distribution of bridging and bonding networks. However, perhaps contrary to expectation, amongst the youngest group (the under 21s) there was a predominance of bonding social capital, perhaps explained by the fact that the majority of this age band were female and lived on one particular site where more traditional social conventions governed. In addition to gender and accommodation, respondents' employment type appeared to be the most important factor in determining with what types of social networks they would commonly engage.

We have noted, that nearly half the interview sample could be described as having access to bridging social capital. Approximately three quarters of respondents exhibiting this type of social behaviour lived in housing. Given that residence in 'bricks and mortar' accommodation is likely to fragment traditional social networks based on extended families, and thus leading to reduced opportunities to secure work in the traditional Traveller Economy, there is an increased drift towards formalised waged employment for housed families. This single factor, together with living surrounded by non-Travellers (albeit social relations may be poor see further below) may be one of the most important issues in promoting bridging capital amongst housed Gypsies and Travellers.

Conversely, we posit that Gypsies and Travellers living on sites who have weaker access to bonded social capital (i.e. divorced women with children who may not have their own relatives in immediate proximity) may be more likely to desire a move into housing where they can access waged employment. It was noteworthy that amongst female respondents with wide bridging (and also in some cases strong simultaneous bonding) social networks, a large number worked in the third sector agencies. Through their involvement in waged employment they have significantly greater interaction with members of the non-Traveller community than do their peers engaged in traditional economic activities.

Bonding social capital operates as an important factor in sustaining the Traveller Economy whilst access to bridging capital is associated with higher levels of financial success and accommodation stability (for both sited and housed Gypsies and Travellers)

We have noted above (and in other chapters)

the relevance of access to high levels of bonding capital to success within the Traveller Economy. In contrast, individuals who reported the highest levels of contact with non-Gypsies and Travellers, (strong bridging capital) were found to be most likely to have undertaken formal education and training courses, to be employed in mainstream employment areas and to be more disposed to economic adaptation and innovation. For these respondents the outcome of such innovation (and engagement with non-traditional behaviours) was access to secure and stable accommodation, a tendency to report positive work experiences and relationships with services providers and networks of contacts with people outside of the Gypsy and Traveller communities as well as their own relatives. These traits were evident for Gypsies and Travellers resident on sites, as well as those in housing who had engaged more fully with 'external' activities and enhanced their bridging capital.

In discussing these broad tendencies it would be wrong however to assume that clear 'one or other' divisions were found in the nature of social engagements/networks. Some respondents who operated within primarily bonding social networks also reported significant contacts with the wider community, although such interactions (for example associated with working) were secondary, regarded as being of limited importance and were at times superficial, (see further Wigfield, et. al., 2010) compared to those in their inner social networks.

*"I have a lot more Traveller friends than non-Traveller friends. It is because I travelled around from place to place over the country, I've lived on sites, so along the way I met a lot of people and they are still my friends today. But being in the centre [Gypsy Traveller community group with mixed staff] everyone here is my friend and we go out. Because they are older than me, my mum and dad don't mind. I think a lot of the Gypsy families prefer the kids not to mix with people outside the community" (G F under 21).*

*"Yes I don't have much contact with the settled community. There is like one or two but they are Irish we have known them all our life and we meet them in the pub and my brothers know the men. That is how we meet the women but we don't really go into their homes" (IT F 21-30).*

#### Work or study experiences can create diverse social networks

Conversely some Gypsies and Travellers had developed important links with the wider 'mainstream' community and also more diverse social networks created through student or work experiences or resulting from the social mix in their neighbourhoods.

*"I have friends in the community but the majority are non-community [not Gypsies or Travellers]. I guess I broke the ice, I know there are other Travellers that went to university but for me it was a new life and a big part of university was my friends but they accepted me for who I am. I told friends what I was and they were interested and wanted to know but in earlier times I was ashamed of where I came from because of bullying and racism but not now, I'm proud of where I come from" (G M 21-30).*

For other respondents however, there seemed little evidence of interaction between Traveller and non-Traveller social networks and a clear tendency to keep the two 'groups' apart:

*"I do mix with a lot of non-Travellers as well. I do know a lot of people in the area. But you don't really mix both because some of the Travellers can't tolerate 'country people'. So I kind of keep it separate sometimes. But when I was in a house that's when I was making all the non-Traveller friends but on the site you don't really make friends with settled people" (IT F 21-30).*

The above quotation illustrates the tensions that can exist between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community; and the impact of peer pressure on keeping 'mixed' networks segregated. The TEIP analysis supports the proposition that experiences of life-long racism and discrimination and Gypsies' and Travellers' expectations of such reactions if 'boundaries' are crossed have acted as perhaps the strongest barrier to inter-community contact, exacerbated by conflicting cultural beliefs (see further Greenfields and Smith, 2010; Shelter, 2007; Derrington & Kendall, 2004).

For some interviewees their experiences of discrimination and racism were profound enough to lead to a sense that their culture and community were 'under siege'. Thus, concerns pertaining to discrimination and experiences of enacted racism were felt by many respondents to be an important factor which influenced



interviewees' choice of work, experience of engaging in transcultural employment, and ultimately their economic opportunities and inclusion.

### Experiences of racism

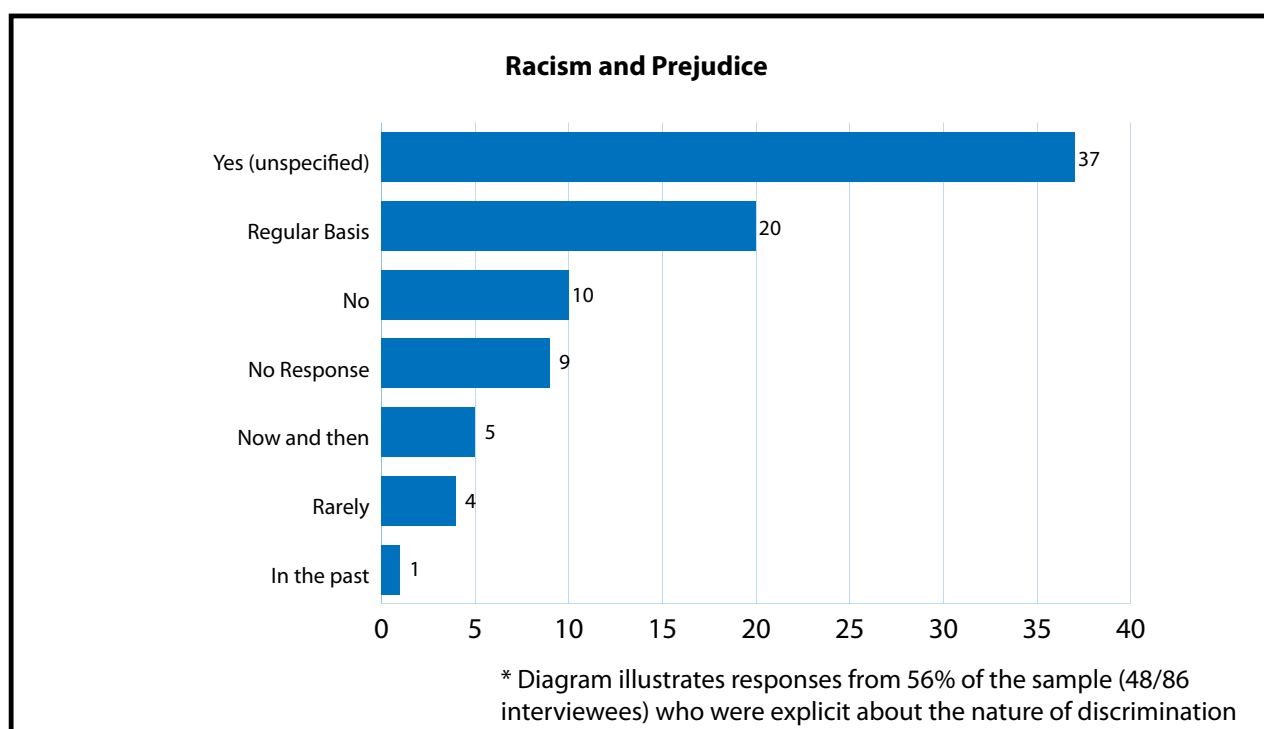
The high levels of racism and enacted discrimination experienced by Gypsies and Travellers are well documented (see further Cemlyn, et. al., 2009) and incontrovertible. We have discussed (in Chapter 9) the impact of racism within school settings on TEIP participants' confidence in remaining in education and explored the impacts on their life-chances of disengagement from the formal educational system. Within this chapter we turn now to explore the impacts of repeated experiences of discrimination on community relations and consider how this affects Gypsies and Travellers' willingness to enter into potentially 'dangerous' employment situations where they may have to engage with members of the wider community in contexts where their skills may be unrecognised and their support needs are often unmet. Table 29 (below) illustrates the prevalence rate of experiences of racism and discrimination in the lives of Gypsy and Irish Traveller interviewees.

### Gypsies and Travellers experience high levels of enacted racism and discrimination

Seventy eight percent of the G/IT sample (67/86 interviewees) reported that they had experienced racism at some point in their lives with 23% of respondents noting that this occurred on a regular basis. For many interviewees, racism consisted of direct challenges from the wider community which manifested itself in social, community and work environments. Experiences of racism were reported by interviewees to be especially prominent in school (Chapter 9) with both teachers and pupils participating in racist behaviours; reports which mirror findings from a number of other studies (e.g. Wilkin et. al., 2009). For some interviewees, experiences of racism have declined after leaving school as interaction with the wider community has become reduced, for others their negative experiences have continued, building up a history of discriminatory experiences and memories of poor quality interactions with the 'wider' community.

One middle-aged respondent felt that racism was less intense in recent years because Gypsies and Travellers were no longer as obvious to the wider community in terms of how they

**Table 29 Gypsy and Irish Traveller interviewees' experiences of racism and discrimination**





dressed and appeared, with Roma who are more 'obviously different' bearing the brunt of racism. Some other participants, particularly those residing in caravans or who had experienced living at 'roadside' or unauthorised encampments, believed that little had changed, as their 'visibility' combined with popular media vitriol expended against Gypsies and Travellers had ensured that they were often the target of abuse. A relatively small number of the interviewees felt that racism towards Gypsies and Travellers was diminishing or at the least had 'gone underground' with people feeling less confident in using racist terms to harass or abuse them:

*"The local doctors they know we are Travellers we don't have a problem with them, the school is very good for my sister's boys. Like I said I haven't got a job outside. I don't really mix much outside my own family and Travellers you know and I don't find when I go into Tesco that someone looks at me and says 'Dirty Gypsy' or something like that. Perhaps we are blending, perhaps if we looked like Travellers more we might get a harder time" (G F 51-60).*

As is indicated in the above quotation, a number of respondents identified that their membership of a white ethnic minority made them relatively invisible. The tendency for participants to wear clothes which were identical to other members of wider society (particularly those working in similar fields e.g. working clothes and driving vans for those engaged in manual trades) and the fact that for many who operated within closed 'bonding' networks they experienced only limited interaction with the wider community also reduced the risk of experiences of racism. One interviewee felt that being professional and housed he was less obviously 'a Gypsy' and consequently was less of 'a target':

*"I am not as visible as a member of the community because I am not in a trailer on the side of the road and don't have to face the day to day racism that people face. I am fortunate in that respect. I do challenge people who come up with views that I consider to be racist and unfair on the community and do end up having disputes with people over what I perceive of as their racism to my community" (G M 41-50).*

The view of the majority of respondents that racism towards Gypsies and Travellers is still intense reflects reports that have cited 'overwhelming evidence' of 'persistent' racism

(Cemlyn et al 2009). Amongst those in the G/IT sample who were explicit about the nature of the racism they had experienced, 8 interviewees/ (12%) reported they had experienced direct racist violence, 8 interviewees/(12%) had experienced verbal abuse, 10 interviewees/(15%) had experienced other forms of 'direct' (unspecified) racism whilst 14 interviewees/(21%) reported what we have classified as 'indirect racism', such as hearing people discuss Gypsies and Travellers in a hostile or derogatory manner without realizing that the participant was present or was a member of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

The respondent quoted below indicated the impact of experiencing life-long discrimination, and the way in which these experiences could lead to cynicism and nostalgia for the past:

*"When I was a kid in the 60s I thought racism and sexism would be dead by the year 2000, I'm the most disappointed man you could meet because it's not dead but getting stronger. That's why I think people look back to a golden age of travelling" (G M 51-60).*

### **Experiences of Racism in Community Settings**

Racism impacts on social situations and diminishes Gypsies' and Travellers' willingness to 'mix' socially

Many respondents discussed the way in which racism was evident in wider community interactions, ranging from 'name calling' and being refused service in pubs to direct threats of violence and intimidation. Racism could also be more subtle, displayed in hostile body language and guarded interaction in social situations:

*"You can be talking to people and people still think it is quite acceptable to be really racist about Gypsies and Travellers. They just think it is OK to do it and it's not and also getting questions about our identity, whoever I'm talking to knows who the real Gypsy is. There are too many people walking around here and trying to tell us who we are and that is full of racism without realising it. I did a piece of work this year and it was called 'The walls can be invisible'; you can go into a room and nobody has to say anything body language is that strong you know what they are thinking. It is very easy when you are talking to people they are talking to you but they don't actually want to talk to you and they think you can't see that. So these*

walls are there and they are invisible and I think that is something what the Travellers are acutely aware of even Traveller kids are aware. That's why I think there are a lot of frictions sometimes in classroom situations because it is an inbuilt racism because of all the stereotyping which historically is going on.' " (G F 41-50).

#### Racism can lead to Gypsies and Travellers being refused access to services

A number of previous reports have noted the relatively common experience of Gypsies and Travellers being refused access to services (e.g. hiring halls; use of launderettes etc. Narratives (and indeed earlier research, see further Cemlyn et. al., 2009) include numerous references to pubs refusing service to Gypsies and Travellers or displaying illegal 'No Travellers' signs. Pubs were in fact, a very common location for racist experiences. Approximately 10 percent of the Gypsy and Traveller sample listed being barred from, or refused service within pubs, or being the brunt of racism comments from other customers as a particular problem. A series of research reports have noted a common experience for Gypsies and Travellers of being refused services (even to the extent of not being able to order in a Pizza to a caravan site; or having difficulties obtaining 'catalogues' to buy items on hire purchase, see further Home and Greenfields, 2006) or experiencing being followed within retail outlets by security guards who perceive them as being more likely to steal goods. A number of participants detailed these 'everyday' incidents of enacted racism or having to engage with and overcome negative stereotypes:

*"...it's an everyday experience [racism]. When I was younger I tried to hide [the fact that] I was an Irish Traveller and it was easy because I lived in a house, but when they did find out they'd call you 'tinker' and in games say 'I don't want to hold her hand.' ....2 years ago I went into a [retailer] and it was my birthday and I went in with 4 kids and I said don't talk. My boy who is now 18 said to me 'What do you mean don't talk?', well I said 'If they find out we're Travellers they're going to follow us all around.' Anyway to cut a long story short we went in and they followed us around and I got to the till and the man said 'I can't serve you.' I asked why and he said for the reason 'you are a Traveller.' " (IT F 31-40).*

*"We asked a local firm to come up and give estimates for planting trees on the site, the man*

*that came up said his boss wouldn't let him come up at first because it was a Traveller site. Anyway in the end he came up here and he said he was expecting the kids to steal from his lorry and for there to be a riot going on but after having walked around the site and met people [he said] 'I can see you're no different to anyone else'" (G F 41-50)*

#### Gypsies and Travellers in housing frequently experience high levels of racism

Racist neighbours are a major source of distress for many housed Gypsies and Travellers, confirming findings from a number of recent reports and GTANA evidence (Shelter, 2007; Richardson, et al. 2007; Greenfields & Smith, 2010-11-04).

*"We bought the home where I live now but when I moved in there, there was some funny stuff with the neighbours. 'We've got a tinker moving in, lock everything away' kind of thing and I've been here for 13 years. After the first couple of years I had some somebody come up to me and says 'You are nothing like what we imagined and you keep yourself to yourself' which I do. I do my own thing and I sell cosmetics from a catalogue and everybody from the street nearly buys off from me" (G F 31-40).*

Despite the fact that some respondents and research indicate that Roma are regarded as more 'visible' and thus potentially at higher risk of experiencing racism (European Dialogue, 2009), Roma interviewees reported that whilst they were aware of the racism towards Gypsies/Roma in the UK, they generally felt safe and believed that in many cases it was not obvious to the wider community that they were Roma but were instead regarded as being from another (indeterminate) ethnic group. This finding may however be reflective of their experiences in their countries of origin as even enacted racism in the UK is likely to be less violent than in A8 and A2 countries, and in addition, linguistic issues or lack of familiarity with expressions or behaviours may potentially not be identified accurately as reflecting anti-Roma discriminatory attitudes. Despite the sense that in general they were 'safe' from racism, fear of encountering hostility was still a source of apprehension, as was how they might be treated by other members of society in particular settings or in certain localities:

*"I live in mainly a white community, people do not know my ethnicity to them I am a Turk or Indian*

*but I don't go to the local pub. I'm not so brave, I mostly go to the city centre" (R M 31-40).*

Recent events in Belfast where Roma were threatened with violence from far right groups indicate that in some areas Roma are becoming a recognised racial target (Guardian 26th July 2009).

For other TEIP participants, Gypsies and Travellers who were living on unauthorised developments and encampments reported that their 'visibility' and lack of secure locations (e.g. parked at a roadside) made them particularly likely to be victims of aggression. Thus, families in these situations were subjected to some of the most acute experiences of racism and were often the butt of community tensions (for example when hostile media reporting occurred, perhaps connected to a newspaper story in relation to unauthorised developments or opposition to Traveller sites): One respondent, living at an unauthorised roadside camp recounted the frequency of such events:

*"This week we only had 4 attacks - what you might call attacks. Three of those were verbal and one throwing stones [people driving by]. In this trailer we have new windows because in Dorchester the old ones were shot out. The wife had gone up north to see her father and in the night I heard this sound and thought it was hail stones but they had been firing airguns. In the morning I could see the outer screens on the windows had been shot out" (G M 51-60).*

A number of the interviewees revealed how, in a range of social situations, discussions about Gypsies and Travellers could arise, during which members of the wider community would make provocative comments, in some cases either not knowing, or not caring about the ethnicity of the respondent. In some cases however such incidents provided important opportunities to challenge racist perceptions:

*"I was at a funeral on one occasion and a Millwall supporter [historically a football club with notoriously racist supporters although robust action by the club is improving the situation] was actually at the funeral of one of my elderly cousins and he was the friend of the son. We were talking outside and somebody out there was a King [surname] so I happened to mention I was a Gypsy and asked them if they were [too]. It was in the obituary of the person being buried that she was a Gypsy and the Millwall lad just turned up and hadn't been to the whole funeral because he had*

*to work and he mentioned he was from Millwall and he was a Millwall supporter and he said 'You are 'pikeys' then?' Obviously we corrected that bit and he said he was there for Mary's funeral, I said 'if you are that 'anti' what are you doing at Mary's funeral?' He said because she was a really lovely lady and I said she was a Gypsy and he said he never knew that and he was there as a friend of the son. We had this discussion and he also admitted that when Millwall have a bad result there is an encampment of Gypsies nearby and they would go out there and cause trouble. I was talking to him and saying to him 'what sort of work do they do? not all of them are on benefits' [in response to stereotypes pertaining to 'dole scrounging Travellers']. I went through all the positives and negatives and he said he was somebody that wouldn't be racist in the future and I hope he was right" (G F 41-50).*

### **Racism in Work**

Gypsies and Travellers can often experience severe racism and harassment in work settings

Given the high frequency of racism towards Gypsies and Travellers in the mainstream community it is not surprising that experiences of racism at work were commonly cited. Not only could those in the Traveller economy be victims of abuse from 'mainstream' populations when seeking employment, but a number of TEIP participants in waged labour also complained of experiencing poor treatment and harassment by fellow staff:

*"When I got married my husband was doing gardening work too. He is an Irish Traveller - he wasn't doing the same sort of work what we were doing. His dad was always a builder his dad has never done fruit and vegetable picking or anything like that. I watched him get chased down roads by people screaming and shouting just for asking if they want their grass cut. Things have been very frightening at times, sometimes he had a lot of trouble, people trying to beat him up for just asking about work" (ST F 31-40).*

*"... one of the misfortunes I had when I worked in the post office was some of the girls that I worked with at school they worked there and they obviously told everybody else where I was from. So I got the name-calling and the racial abuse which really in that environment you couldn't really do much about, there wasn't anybody to complain to" (G F 41-50).*



### Racism can also exist in professional work environments

A number of respondents reported to the TEIP that personal experiences of racism, or witnessing colleagues making discriminatory comments was also common in professional settings, for example whilst participating in professional training sessions in educational environments and even in work situations within Gypsy/Traveller third sector organisations:

*"Me and my colleague she is also a Traveller and we've done [education] inset sessions on Gypsy and Traveller lifestyle culture. We've gone into the university and done inset, and we asked them what do they think about Travellers and we've had things that make your blood run cold and then afterwards we actually said 'we are both Gypsies and Travellers' and we've had 'NO!!!!'. One of them came up to me and said 'I'm sorry, I do apologise' and she had literally said to me that 'all Travellers do this and just live on the dole, cause mess and destruction everywhere'. Had she known we were Travellers she wouldn't have said all this but she did because we were just totally not what she was expecting. All that stereotyping - what she has done all day long - we just flattened it like that. So we have all these things said to us and tell them at the end which really shocks them especially when you have a whole day with them because they are just not expecting that and it is quite shocking. We even had one person walk out the room when she found out after a whole day with us, she just got up and walked out of the room." (G F 21-30).*

### Gypsies and Travellers experience discrimination in recruitment

The most frequently cited experience of employment related racism relates to discrimination in recruitment when participants provide a site address. This finding mirrors findings in GTANAs (see Appendix B for details of GTANAs which explore this topic) and other research, e.g. Greenfields, 2008). Interviewees were explicit and united in their identification of the fact that a 'site address' alerted employers to their ethnicity and frequently meant that they were either not called to interview, or if interviewed were not offered employment, or were victimised within the work place.

*"I had an interview [JobCentre] last week. I took my CV in and the lady asked if there is any problem why I find it hard to get work. I said 'yes one problem is my address where I live -*

*and because I'm a Gypsy'. She said do another CV take your address off. But I think why should you take your address off? She said if you take your address off probably you would be better for work. If I lived in a house and get a house address that would make it better for me, just because we live on a caravan site you are automatically a Gypsy and [there are assumptions of] stealing they don't treat everybody the same" (G F 41-50).*

A common defensive tactic used by 'sited' Gypsies and Travellers seeking employment in the waged labour sector is to make use of a 'care of' address of a housed friend or relative, thus enabling them to disguise their address and thus their ethnicity (see further GTANA evidence; Greenfields, 2008; Cemlyn et. al., 2009)

In tacit recognition of this location based discrimination, Communities and Local Government guidance on site design (CLG, 2008) suggests that the developers of new sites may wish to devise standard street names for sites which do not indicate that they are in fact residential Gypsy sites, thus potentially reducing the incidence of such discrimination. However, one interviewee who was a social entrepreneur was adamant that a site he was developing would be known as a 'site' and have a 'traditional Gypsy site name', to do otherwise, he argued was to be coerced into hiding one's identity in response to racism.

### Respondents' reactions to racism

In Chapter 9 some interviewees discussed how when they were children they would sometimes physically retaliate to racist incidents or discriminatory comments. By the time respondents had reached adulthood the majority had accepted that not only was this an inappropriate way of dealing with such events but that the all-pervasive nature of 'anti-Gypsyism' meant that they were likely to experience discrimination and racism on a regular basis throughout their lives. This almost fatalistic acceptance of discrimination and racism meant that within the TEIP survey we found very few cases where interviewees had made formal complaints to the authorities about racism. Amongst many respondents there was a perception that the authorities in any sector (be they police, or those designated to deal with complaints procedures in other settings) would not deal adequately with such complaints of discriminatory or racist behaviour towards Gypsies and Travellers.

An additional hurdle to seeking assistance or redress for racism within the workplace was that virtually none of the interviewees were trade union members, as many of those in low waged employment were employed in areas where union organisation is particularly weak, and in any event, there is no strong tradition of such collective action amongst communities where individualism and independence are prized.

This lack unionisation and limited awareness of modes of redress have no doubt reduced the likelihood of Gypsy and Traveller staff who have been victimised taking formal action against the perpetrator. A number of respondents who had direct experience of employment related racism also referred to their resigned expectations that they would be the butt of racist behaviours:

*"I think it is a part of our life really. When you are younger you start fighting against it but now you just carry on with your life and walk away from it. I think they've got a problem you haven't got a problem. I think we are discriminated against more than other minorities but that is just the way it is" (IT M 41-50).*

In contrast, several other interviewees stated that their response to racist language was vigorous, whilst a greater number reported trying to discuss the views of the racist person and reason with them where possible.

The TEIP has posited that widespread perceptions of endemic racism and hostility amongst the wider community may provide a partial explanation for respondents' low levels of involvement in mainstream community organisations. Overall, other than involvement in church and faith groups, which played an important part in the lives of many interviewees, only four participants in the G/IT sample belonged to wider community groups (e.g clubs; local community groups, political organizations, etc.). We posit that low participation rates in wider community groups may stem from a combination of high levels of bonding social capital which places a premium on engagement with family and ethnic group networks rather than those which are 'outside' of the community; but also a pervasive sense of 'not being welcome' in other transcultural settings.

### **Supporting the Community through Volunteering**

Twenty two respondents (25% of the G/IT sample) were involved in voluntary work undertaken specifically with and for the Gypsy and Traveller community. Whilst this relatively high figure is likely to be reflective of the make-up of the sample, given that a large number of the interviewees were employed in community groups and that such employment had originated from voluntary work with which many of them continued, the relationship between volunteering and engagement with civil society is close. Volunteering which primarily benefits the group or community to which a volunteer belongs is recognized as a model of 'mutual aid/self-help' (Volunteer England, 2010), but this type of volunteering still holds the capacity to develop bridging capital (see above and Chapter 11) and enhance the volunteer's skills in a manner which enables them to transfer the lessons learnt to other contexts. It is likely that TEIP participants who are active in volunteering feel most at ease undertaking community volunteering in their own cultural context where they will not be exposed to discrimination as well as recognizing the critical need given the high levels of exclusion and discrimination faced by Gypsies and Travellers. We posit that as the community becomes more engaged with wider society (a trend which we have identified in earlier chapters) Gypsy and Traveller volunteers are likely to engage with a broader range of civic activities whilst still undertaking inter-community volunteering.

The figure of 22 TEIP interviewees who are active volunteers is comparable to levels of volunteerism in the wider community where it has been estimated that a quarter of people formally volunteer at least once a month (CLG 2009; Volunteer England, 2010).

### **Revealing Ethnicity at Work**

Within the TEIP questionnaire we explored with participants whether (and how) they revealed their ethnicity to work colleagues. We devised this question with the intent of exploring how 'safe' individuals felt in working situations and their confidence in being able to self-identify as a member of a minority ethnic group – factors which are critical to a number of domains within the Equalities Measurement Framework (EMF).



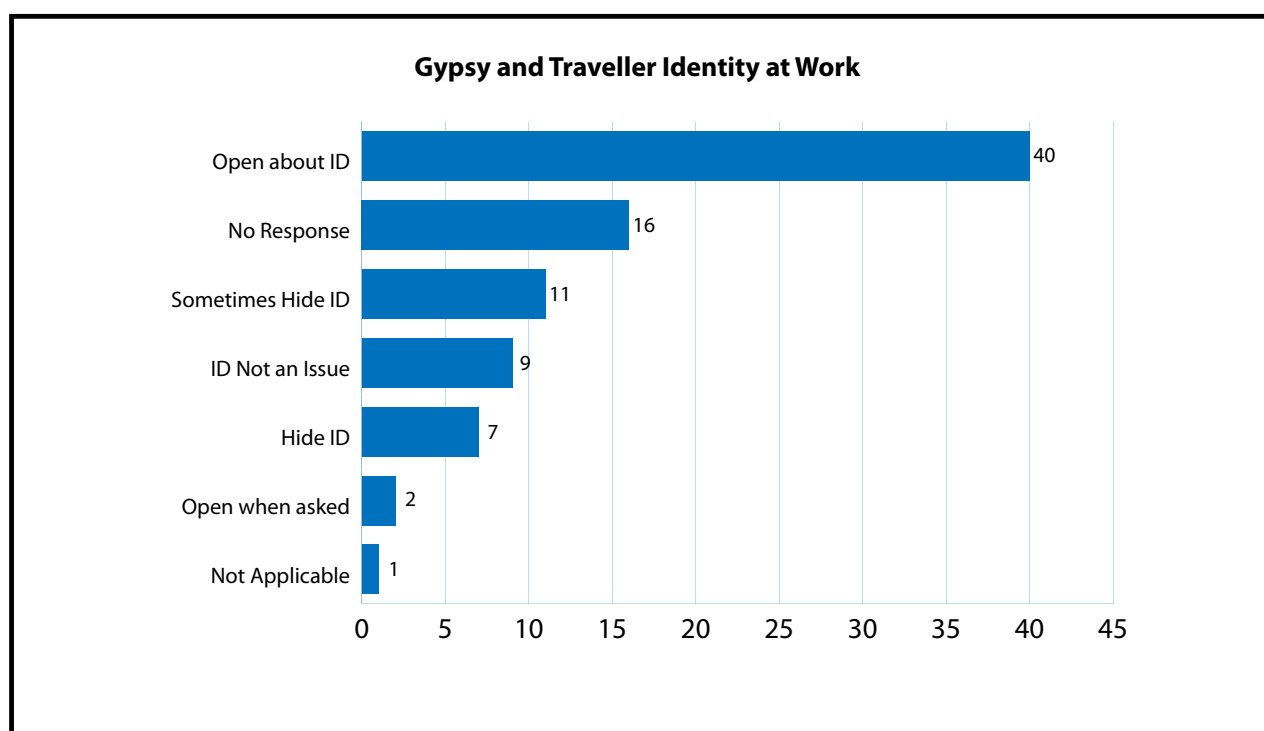
**Table 30: Gypsies' and Irish Travellers' self-ascription at work**

Table 30 above details interviewees' responses to this question, revealing both a remarkably positive indicator of community confidence, and (for some) providing evidence of the nature of their employment networks (for example if working within the 'Traveller economy' or in a community project for Gypsies and Travellers it is nonsensical to attempt to 'hide' one's identity).

Gypsies and Travellers are proud of their ethnicity and many are confident in revealing their identity at work

To some extent feeling able to reveal one's identity safely not only depended upon how much work associates outside the Gypsy and Traveller community were trusted, but also the context in which someone worked. For interviewees in less well paid, more insecure waged employment greater risk could clearly attach to revealing ethnicity in some circumstances where racist bullying might take place. Thus, the decision to 'reveal' or 'pass' were critical factors which could have a clear impact on economic opportunities and well-being in work environments and which required a nuanced decision making process which varied according to circumstances.

In contrast, a number of interviewees prominent amongst those who were open about identity felt strongly that pride in their heritage meant that it was an act of disloyalty to family and

culture to deny their ethnic origins. Thus, a number of interviewees working in the traditional Traveller economy or as skilled tradesmen stated that customers with whom they had regularly traded were fully aware of their ethnicity.

*"I never hide anything on any ethnicity form. I do say what I am and I don't feel ashamed of who I am, but then again if I had kind of changed it in the past I wouldn't be here today [would probably have been more economically successful]. I think it would have benefited me work wise previously if I had not put down what I was" (G M 21-30).*

*"My employers know exactly where I am from. Yes I am a Traveller but judge me by what I do. I remember Charles Smith who was a councillor and CRE commissioner saying 'I'm a mayor and Commissioner who happens to be a Gypsy not the Gypsy Commissioner and Mayor' – that's how I feel" (IT M 51-60).*

A large proportion of those who did reveal their ethnicity were involved in voluntary work for Gypsies and Travellers and thus were probably more politicised about revealing their identity. In addition, as noted above, for those (predominantly younger, female) participants who worked in Gypsy and Traveller community groups or related services, work environments were places where they could freely reveal their

ethnicity, often leading them to raise identity as an issue with service users:

*"Yes, because it makes them [clients of the community project where she is employed] feel at ease at times. I don't always do it straight away but I do find that with quite a few to mention it and for them to make a connection with you it makes them feel a lot more at ease" (G F 41-50).*

#### Some Gypsies and Travellers are cautious or hide their identity

We have noted above that revealing one's identity could have a significantly detrimental effect on social and work relations as well as employment opportunities. Whilst younger women working in community and public sector agencies were most likely to be explicit about their ethnicity, other respondents were far more cautious. Thus, a number of interviewees gave ambiguous responses to the question of how open they were about their ethnic identity, for example, claiming that they didn't need to state who they were as it was obvious from the way they spoke and acted, in essence relying on the other party's understanding and knowledge of Gypsy/Traveller characteristics e.g. body language, accent, to be able to identify them as a community member. This tactic allows the Gypsy or Traveller to control the encounter to a greater extent through not self-identifying in a way which permits the listener/recipient of the knowledge to 'buy in' to a set of crude ethnic stereotypes, instead relying on the other person having either some understanding and knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller culture which enables them to identify the Gypsy/Traveller, or 'passing' as a member of mainstream society. Yet other respondents asked explicitly why they should be expected to self-ascribe in work contexts, reasoning that other ethnic groups would not make a great 'show and display' of their identity at first acquaintance.

A common fear for many interviewees (particularly those involved in the Traveller economy or in relatively casualised work) was they would lose work or not be paid if a customer knew of their ethnicity, thus emphasizing the importance of 'reading' the situation and responding to the degree of trust they had in the member of the wider community:

*"You work out who to trust and who to not. You work out who will be against you, it's more of a life*

*skill of who is not going to say 'I'm not going to be your friend and not talk to you any more' or 'I'm going to cause problems for you so you get sacked'. So you work it out yourself from life skills really and there's certain people who have the jokes [with me] and I've got a couple of friends there that know I'm a Traveller and they have their jokes and they look at me and I just laugh and they just laugh with me kind of thing. They know I've got to the stage where it doesn't bother me. You do work it out from life skills. [But] it's difficult" (G F 31-40).*

*"Yes, I do experience racism but not as much as other Travellers because the way I dress and speak and the work I do. People don't immediately realise, I cultivated that. I had my own business for years and didn't tell everyone I was a Traveller. You know some Travellers will do that because they need to make a living. They turn round and tell us to confront racism but you have to be careful how you confront it. It's a generational thing. A lot more Travellers are supposed to stand up for their rights but I'm not sure how many my age are willing to do what I do" (G M 61-70).*

*"It goes back to the years of mistrust. People who know me personally they know I'm a Gypsy and they treat me no different than anybody else as if I'm a friend and that's it but people that don't know me if I tell them 'Look I'm a Gypsy' what are they going to say It is like walking into a room and saying I'm a murderer" (G M 51-60).*

One interviewee had recently decided to reveal his identity/heritage more widely in the academic institution where he worked. His feelings of apprehension indicate that even in a more 'liberal' work environment this action could contain risk:

*"I have never said anything to anyone in this line of work. Although academics are fairly liberal it only extends so far. I've said to some people about this work on Gypsies and Travellers and they've said 'watch your pockets' and I've thought 'Jesus you're supposed to be ultra-liberal academics'. They're not all like that, some are genuinely interested. I have though mentioned it to a few people at work recently and a girl asked me 'do you find it difficult to work with a community to which you are an outsider?' and I thought 'bollocks' and told her about my background. How else could I answer her? I'll wait to see what happens" (G M 41-50).*

Given the large number of respondents who had experienced racism it was unsurprising that a significant number hid their ethnicity or had

done so in the past when interacting with the wider community in working environments. Stonewall guidance on employment issues for Gay and Lesbian employees has stated that hiding sexual identity in work places where employees do not feel at ease, can cause significant anxiety and reduce confidence (Stonewall, 2007). The same point can equally be made for Gypsies and Travellers in the work place.

Thus, the following painful quotation reveals the damage and anxiety that can be caused by receiving negative reactions to revealing one's ethnicity

*"I didn't have many friends I've never had friends in my life. I've never been able to make friends. I've always felt socially excluded, different. I've always stopped myself telling people what I was until I felt comfortable in my own skin that they wouldn't judge me which is still even now so with customers. I still can't tell them what I am. They have an element straightaway of distrust. An example of that is I've had a friend since I was 11 years old. They actually found out this year that I'm actually a Romany Gypsy and he dropped me like a lead balloon and I've known him for 30 years" (G M 41-50).*

### Concluding Reflection

As outlined in this chapter, life-long experience of hostility from the wider community can impact negatively on a range of life chances and economic inclusion and also on the levels of trust and confidence that Gypsies and Travellers feel able to place in wider society and institutions such as schools and workplaces.

The Good Relations Measurement Framework identifies four key domains (attitudes to and from others, personal security, interaction with others and participation and influence in civic life) which determine community relations and quality of life (Widgefield and Turner, 2010). The TEIP would argue that the tensions within community relations and generally poor experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in the context of inter-cultural interactions presented in this chapter form a major and shameful impediment to progressing the social inclusion and full citizenship of members of these minority ethnic communities.

## **Part Four – Good Practice and Recommendations**

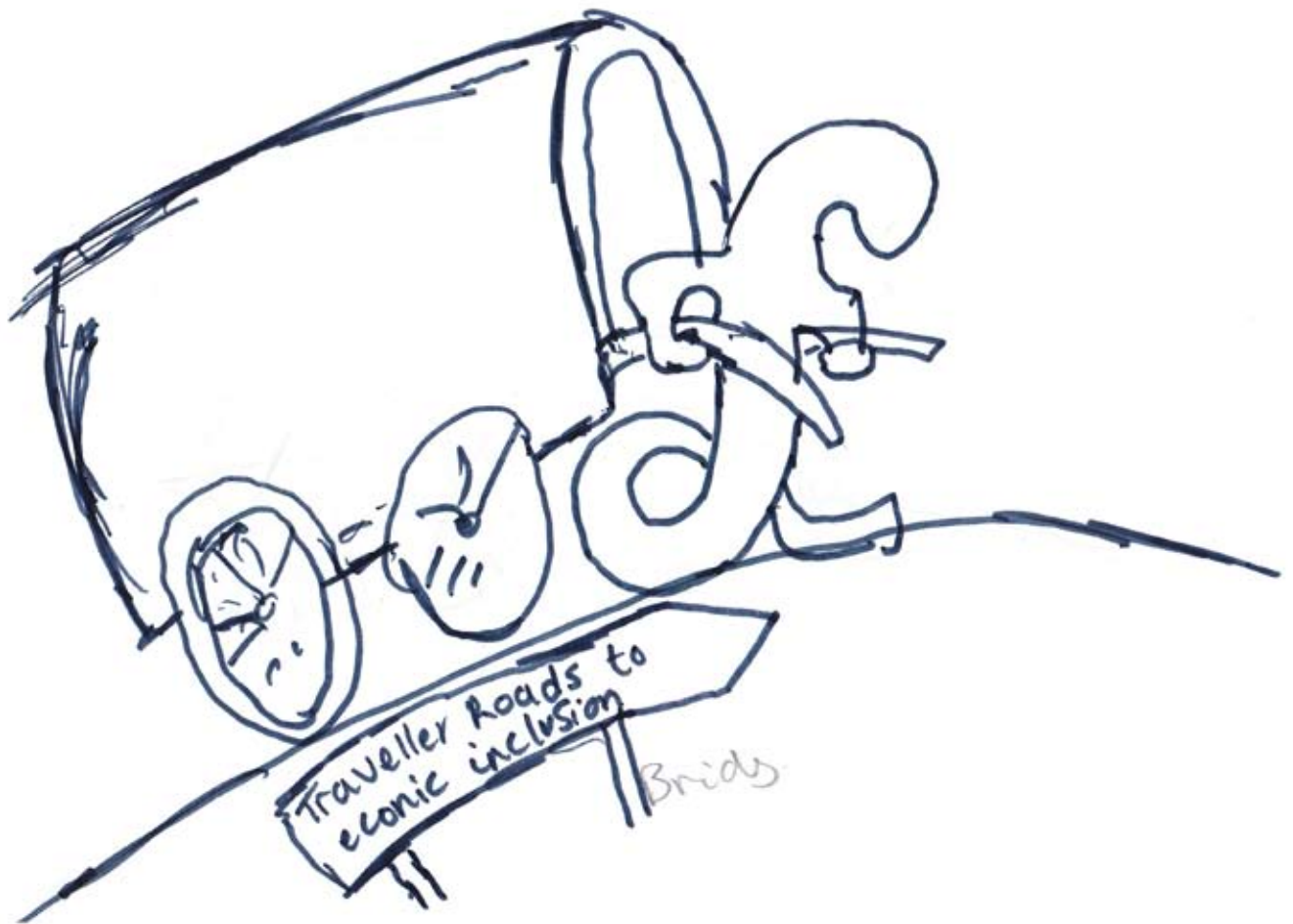
In this concluding section of the report, we bring together the diverse strands of the TEIP research to present a series of policy recommendations and good practice examples drawn from our engagement with community groups and individuals who have participated in the study.

These case study examples are by no means definitive. However, the examples selected for inclusion in Chapter Eleven are illustrative of strategies utilised by agencies and individuals which have proven to be effective in supporting the community into employment and equally, for those already engaged in work (often in the community sector) in assisting them to move into positions which offer greater scope for progression and skill development, leading to a greater degree of employment or educational choice.

The Traveller Economic Inclusion Team are particularly keen to hear of other examples of good practice and to disseminate this information to agencies and individuals who wish to learn how they can support Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (RGT) into full economic inclusion, through making use of the lessons learned in other settings. We invite Gypsies, Travellers, Roma and other stakeholders (organizations and employers/employees) to submit information relating to good practice examples in employment and economic inclusion matters, so that we can continue to build up resources and develop an 'information bank'. If you wish to tell us about a particular initiative or example please email a short paragraph containing information about the project/example and a web address or other contact details to the Irish Traveller Movement: [Tiep@irishtraveller.org.uk](mailto:Tiep@irishtraveller.org.uk)

In the final chapter of the report we conclude by summarising the answers to the key questions posed in the preceding sections. Our responses to these questions are informed by a review of published literature and policy initiatives, combined with the TEIP data provided by interviewees.

Finally, we provide a series of detailed policy recommendations which we present to Government, policy makers, public and private sector agencies as recommendations for effectively enhancing the social and economic inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain.



# ***Chapter Eleven***

***Good Practice***



## Chapter Eleven

### Good Practice

This chapter focuses on a number of 'good practice' examples of economic and social inclusion initiatives being delivered by statutory and third sector agencies.

Whilst these case studies do not offer a definitive list of good practice, it is inevitable that in a study of this type and size only a small number of examples could be selected for inclusion. Thus in this section of the report a representative sample of initiatives are included from the Northern, Midlands and Southern regions, indicating a range of ways of engaging to enhance the economic inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers.

The format of this chapter is as follows: a brief overview of each of the showcased organisations (divided into statutory and voluntary sector projects) is provided, which includes a summary of their main employment initiatives impacting on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers which involves proactive engagement with the communities in question. This is followed with a discussion of local and national policies and the ways in which these impact on GRT economic inclusion is then linked to consideration of the potential for 'positive action' to mitigate the worst impacts of long-term exclusion for members of these communities.

Finally a concluding precis presents how an 'ideal type' of community organisation might look, and contemplates ways in which the emerging 'Big Society' model may potentially enable additional programmes and projects to come to fruition, effectively engaging with marginalised communities on a larger scale than heretofore.

### Statutory Sector Groups

\* Leeds Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service <http://www.grtleeds.co.uk/>

\* Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/parents/race/about/>

\* Doncaster Connexions <http://www.connexionsdoncaster.co.uk/>

\* Haringey Travelling Peoples' Team <http://www.haringey.gov.uk/travellers.htm>

### Leeds Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service (GRTAS)

Peter Saunders, Head of Service for Leeds GRTAS was interviewed by TEIP. The organisation encompass significant changes that have taken place in Traveller Education Services over several decades. The service has moved from delivering 'on-site' separatist provision via buses going onto sites to more strategic work which supports and advises a range of service providers including schools and training institutes.

Peter described his early days in the service and how, after one afternoon of induction, he started the post:

*"I was given the keys to a mobile vehicle, we had a teaching vehicle and I just got to know people by knocking on doors... Basically, there were about 4-5 children in school [in Leeds area] and then no-one else attended school. So it was very much, 'the schools are here... the Travellers over there'... and nobody was doing that linking and so that's how I began... I went out onto the camps... opened the doors of the van and all the kids piled in. The kids were not getting what everyone else was getting, not getting what my kids were getting, a 9-4 education in a nice environment. What they were getting were a couple of hours in the back of a van".*

Policy and practice changes in the intervening decades supported by the experienced leadership of Peter and his team, have ensured that Leeds GRTAS now works on a more strategic level addressing what Peter describes as the 5 'A's, ensuring that pupils are supported in: access, achievement, ascription, aspiration and attendance.

Working towards these goals involves guiding mainstream service providers (such as schools) in providing appropriate service delivery and supporting GRT community members in progressing through the various tiers of education (including further education).

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members are integral to the success of this service delivery. Three community members are employed: one teaching assistant who is a

Romany Gypsy and two Roma inclusion/support officers. Prior to the ending of a short-term pilot project, funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, three other GRT staff members had also been employed as teaching assistants. The rationale for such a model of working (in addition to social justice) was three-fold: first, to ensure staff members were fully culturally competent. Secondly, to ensure other staff were kept abreast of the needs and aspirations of the client group, and finally, to explicitly impact upon GRT perceptions of the service.

*"...we [staff team] all meet here and we talk about our work, there are members of the community here and they inform us...they keep us on the right track so that we don't kind of wander off and think 'oh this is what the communities wants'...it is really important to have employment opportunities for community members because I think that it impacts so positively on the community. It capacity builds within the community when that community member finishes work they talk to everybody else about what they are doing and about what our service is doing and so it spreads the word more".*

Peter also stressed the importance of site visits and informal discussion with community members as a means of informing the education service. However, a number of TES staff (across all regions) feel that maintaining such contacts is becoming harder as a result of the policy of 'mainstreaming' which emphasises that strategic support is provided to other services, rather than focusing on individual need. As a result, some education services are reducing their contact with sites and community members.

The key lesson from this project is to work in partnership with community members in supporting young people into appropriate educational and training opportunities. Engagement with education for longer periods of time can act as a mechanism for delivering skills which ensure greater access to employment, bringing the benefits of increased economic well-being, confidence, independence and (wherever possible) accessed to enhanced bridging capital.

## **Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service**

The Traveller Education team in Cambridgeshire is part of Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service (CREDS). Kim Tolley, Traveller Education Community Inclusion Manager, was interviewed for the TEIP study.

CREDS currently employs two GRT staff as teaching assistants, and one other community member works in an outreach role. Previously, four community members were based within the service, and an explicit target exists for employing more GRT staff.

One barrier to meeting this objective has been the lack of adequate literacy skills of the community members to support children in schools. Where this has impacted on the ability to recruit community staff, CREDS has supported GRT employees to enhance their skills and move into employment. This has been combined with adopting a creative and flexible view of how to up-skill and validate staff learning, which may look beyond formal qualifications.

Kim noted that role specific pressures could exist for community staff. In some cases, schools could have unreasonable expectations of GRT support staff sometimes in breach of both statutory responsibilities and job descriptions:

*".....loading everything on one person - which some schools do with all of us - ... they think the Traveller Education Team do absolutely everything and we don't have to do it".*

However, despite the potentially problematic relationship in some working environments, Kim stressed the enormously positive impact on children of having role models from their own communities:

*"Some of the Irish Traveller kids were absolutely amazed to see a Traveller woman in class [working as a teaching assistant]"*

CREDS works flexibly and collaboratively to raise educational aspirations of local GRT children and seeks to emulate the success of other projects. Currently they are hoping to build upon the work of (neighbouring) Suffolk Traveller Education Service which has showcased Gypsy and Travellers' education and employment achievements by inviting

successful GRT individuals to act as role models and involves them meeting with service providers and other community members. The 'roads to success' event<sup>2</sup> has been well received by participants and both Suffolk and CREDs staff

value the opportunity to discuss community aspirations in such a forum. In particular, Kim recommended that the success of a service should be measured in part by its ability to fulfil the aspirations of service users.

A key lesson from the Cambridgeshire project is to explore ways of enhancing the profile of successful community members as a way of raising young peoples' aspirations whilst creating powerful bridging networks demonstrating someone remains as much 'A Gypsy or Traveller' as ever, while engaging with mainstream services.

### Doncaster Connexions

The Connexions service provides information, advice and guidance (including job search and work-based learning support) to young people and in particular is aimed at supporting those young people who are most at risk as a result of being 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET). The statutory service was established in 2001 in response to the Social Exclusion Unit's report 'Bridging the Gap' which highlighted the problems and issues faced by unemployed young people who lack academic qualifications.

The interviewee within the Doncaster based Connexions service was David Scott, a Personal Advisor with a remit for working with young Gypsies and Travellers. David's post arose following a 2002 pilot project which highlighted the specific need for a dedicated Gypsy/ Traveller staff member. Good contacts within the community have enabled David to tailor targeted and bespoke courses like the 'lads and dads' course where three generations of a family can train together in family learning orientated courses focused on activities such as bricklaying. David stressed that the strength of the service lies in the high level of direct contact he has with the community and their engagement in service direction. Speaking about the 'front-line' aspects of his role (in contrast to finding funding for programmes) David noted that:

*"I meet very hard-to-reach communities. It opens doors it gives you access into personal*

*private lives that you wouldn't see in any other way...it gives you a better understanding of the needs of young people and adults and what courses they need. [Personal] contact helps resolve some of the concerns they have got and it leads into doing other things as well...it is not just about doing training, it is about meeting...and working with the whole community."*

A key lesson from this programme is that face-to-face engagement with community members, 'listening' to what is required and tailoring 'personalised' approaches are the most effective ways of helping people into work or education. With imagination, services can deliver inter-generational training which supports the Traveller economy just as effectively as they can meet individual training needs which support young people into the 'mainstream' economy. Flexibility is the answer.

### Haringey Travelling Peoples' Team

Haringey Travelling Peoples' Team (HTPT) is a partnership statutory service based within the Social Services department of Haringey Council and partially supported by central government 'Supporting People' funding. A preventative and community oriented social work model prevails within the service which seeks to address Gypsy and Travellers' personal issues before they reach crisis point. As such the service acts as a first point of call and a bridge between the local authority and the (estimated) 2,500 Travellers residing in the borough.

Key project activities involve raising Traveller awareness of facilities and facilitating access to services, provision of welfare rights/drop in centres and joint case work and partnership working with other statutory and voluntary services. The team has also been involved in a number of targeted 'positive action' initiatives which aim to support economic inclusion.

HTPT in partnership with other voluntary and statutory sector organisations (e.g. the London Gypsy Traveller Unit and Haringey TES) have organised work experience places for young Travellers. Another initiative, involves the delivery of a driving theory support group programme (in partnership with Haringey Library Services) which has assisted Travellers in 'getting legal' (obtaining driving licences to enable them to legally engage in Traveller economies) rather than as a route to accessing employment. Another, project has facilitated a focus group to feed into Gypsy, Traveller and

other Needs Assessments. In addition, HTPT has worked closely with the local Connexions service to devise tailored information on training and development opportunities for Traveller youth.

Michael Ridge a community social worker with nearly a decade's experience in the HTPT service was interviewed for the TEIP project. He reports that Travellers are typically caught between two economic cultures meaning that their needs are often not addressed. Michael is working towards developing sustainable and long term youth projects in partnership with Connexions services, which will offer personalised training opportunities and is based on best practice models. It is intended that such courses will be developed in partnership with young Travellers so that they 'own' the project by participating in design to ensure that their needs and aspirations are met.

As a community practitioner Michael is adamant that more recognition is required at a national (Government-led) policy level, to recognise the academic potential inherent within Traveller communities and which can develop where adequate support is available and appropriate models of curricula are provided. He argues that by following this approach, individuals with advanced skills and capabilities would be enabled to access leadership courses which will provide them with entry to high profile positions and support them in acting as role models and community representatives, thus further enhancing community cohesion agendas.

The main lesson learned from the HTPT is to consult with communities and offer a flexible programme which meets the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Engaging in inter-agency networking opportunities enables coordinating agencies to save costs through identifying what is wanted by local Travellers and which services will actually be used. The HTPT are clear that where organisations work together with communities, not only are culturally appropriate services delivered but new inter-cultural networks are formed as part of the process. Through these networks, opportunities can arise for Gypsies and Travellers to engage with volunteering, access to work experience and training and the development of leadership courses which will enhance community cohesion and individual economic wellbeing.

### **National Level Community Projects**

\* Friends Families and Travellers <http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/>

\* The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain <http://www.irishtraveller.org.uk/>

\* The Traveller Times Magazine <http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/>

### **Friends, Families and Travellers**

Friends, Families and Travellers FFT) is a charity operating with a national remit. As one of the leading charities and campaigning bodies working with GRT in Britain, it has access to substantial levels of funding and is actively involved with a wide consortium of international, national and local policy agencies.

Initially set up in 1994 to support 'new' Travellers, in the intervening years the focus of FFT has changed dramatically and it now serves all Gypsy and Traveller groups in Britain. Today over 50 percent of FFT's work is undertaken with English Romany Gypsies, 30 percent with Irish Travellers and less than 20 percent with new Travellers and others e.g. Scottish Travellers and Roma.

FFT is both a campaigning organisation and a provider of frontline health and youth services. The Director of FFT, Chris Whitwell was interviewed on behalf of TEIP. He noted that the casework and support services undertaken by the organisation have an important role in supporting FFT's policy engagement:

*"We work at national, regional and local levels. At local level we do case work [and] outreach, which is really about supporting Gypsies and Travellers into accessing the services that they need. At national level we are still very much a campaigning and policy influencing organisation setting out how to change the agenda. .... the important strength of the organisation is the way that the case work data that we get both at the local level...[via the National Helpline] where we pick up a lot of cases from all over the country... informs the policy and campaigning work. There is a direct relationship between the grassroots service provision and the strategic work that we are doing."*

After recovering from a period of funding difficulties when the agency only employed three members of staff, FFT has within five years stabilised and grown to an organisation with 18 staff members, approximately half of whom are members of Gypsy and Traveller communities.

The presence of such a high number of Traveller staff, Chris believes has had a positive impact on perceptions of the agency:

*"Any structure, any organisation that proposes to work on behalf of a community, needs to be fairly representative of the community which it's working on behalf of. You wouldn't expect a women's organisation to be staffed by a bunch of men making decisions about what's best for women. I guess it is the same with Gypsies and Travellers except that...the traditional Traveller community is often coming from quite a low base of engagement with mainstream processes....we benefit from having a mix of Gypsies and Travellers and non-Gypsies/non-Traveller staff. They learn from each other. Quite a lot of staff that don't come from a Traveller background learn obviously about culture and customs of the Traveller community and the staff from the Traveller community are learning about mainstream processes and structures."*

A key lesson from FFT is to recognise the way in which knowledge sharing between staff acts as a catalyst for change and provides learning opportunities for all parties. The processes for ensuring that communication between teams occurs and that best practice learnt in one work strand are carried over to another, are effective lessons for any voluntary or public sector employer.

### **The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain**

The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (ITMB) is a registered charity founded in 2000. In common with FFT, the other large national charity, the agency has undergone dramatic change in recent years, moving from having one employee five years ago to the current situation in 2010, employing thirteen members of staff.

ITMB is a policy based agency which has a strong history of supporting Irish Travellers to 'have a voice' in public affairs. ITMB provides a platform for community members to articulate their aspirations; provides capacity building opportunities for community members and

campaigns around both Traveller and other Gypsy/Roma policy issues. The ITMB Director Yvonne McNamara was interviewed on behalf of the TEIP project.

Yvonne stressed that ITMB's 'sessional worker' initiative has made an important contribution to increasing the employment experience of Travellers; in simultaneously supporting them to contribute and bring their expertise to policy and outreach projects. Sessional worker posts enable Travellers to be employed for fixed-term periods to contribute to specific projects. For example, supporting and developing the organisation of Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month activities which take place each June, and working with the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project.

Yvonne outlined the importance of sessional employment stating that:

*"...by creating the sessional workers' post - where we know there is work which the community members are well capable of [doing], we offer that post for the community. It is about building the skills and the confidence of being part of a team within an organisation and hopefully helping people grow so that they know that they ... can be sessional workers but [then] progress to full-time or part-time workers and eventually move up [the structure of the organisation]. We would employ people directly from the community as sessional workers before we would employ people from the settled community. The people that can do that job best are the community and with a little bit of nurturing and training there is no reason why they can't deliver that particular piece of work."*

*"So we do apply positive action. It is important to help people engage, it is important for us that we can go down that road and use the positive action to try to bring the community on, to include them economically, to give them employment, and hopefully develop them out of the experience they gain with us."*

Whilst the sessional worker roles have significant value in enhancing the work skills of Traveller community members, Yvonne reported that the fact that ITMB is not predominantly a frontline service limits the on-going work opportunities for many community members, as most of the permanent posts at present which have been available, were at strategic level (e.g. Parliamentary linked policy posts) that required higher education levels than were currently



held by the majority of Travellers working on the project.

ITMB works to engage with volunteers and offers training and a range of opportunities, particularly for members of the Traveller community. However, Yvonne felt that the value of volunteering as a means to develop future employment has often not been fully recognised by community members, especially in relation to undertaking policy and 'community voice' work where the results of contributions could be less apparent than when involved in delivering frontline services.

The ITMB operates with the guidance of a committee of Trustees whose policy focus and expertise are predominantly in areas of charity, employment law and other related issues. An advisory group composed solely of Irish Travellers works in tandem with the Trustees and provides the campaigning direction to the organisation. This separation of responsibilities has been regarded as beneficial by Travellers and other staff alike, as some activists and community members reported finding the bureaucratic demands of Trustee meetings frustrating and time-consuming. For Trustees, the demands of dealing with employment legislation and funding issues had meant that campaign activities were in danger of being neglected. The combination of both sets of committees has therefore proved beneficial both in organizational terms and in enabling individual skills development.

The key lessons from ITMB are ensuring that Gypsy and Traveller staff employed through positive action are upskilled through access to supported training and then equipped with the skills to break out of the 'glass box' (Chapter 6) so that they can use transferable skills to make the transition to employment in any agency within the sector. Devising programmes and mechanisms which play to the skills and strengths of staff, volunteers and advisors, has enabled ITMB to create an efficient organisation which makes the best use of the knowledge and experience of everyone involved.

### **Travellers' Times**

The Travellers' Times (TT) is a community based magazine, managed by the Rural Media Company and registered as a charity. The original publication was established thirteen

years ago by Luke Clements and Rachel Morris of the Traveller Law Reform Unit (Cardiff University) and initially focused on case work and law reform issues. In recent years, since the publication has come under the auspices of the Rural Media Company, the focus of the project has changed and it is now published in a 'glossy magazine' format as well as having an on-line presence.

Whilst articles on policy and law reform are still important dimensions of the magazine, the content has broadened out significantly and is now aimed at a community readership rather than at (as originally) lawyers and policy makers working with and on behalf of Gypsies and Travellers. The publication now consists primarily of articles and photographic spread relating to wider community interests and developments, for example, Gypsy and Traveller musicians, employment initiatives, etc. The magazine has a print run of 21,000 but, as the magazine version is distributed on sites and passed around within families, it is estimated that Travellers Times has a readership of 80,000.

Bill Laws, Director of the magazine (who is not himself a Gypsy or Traveller) was interviewed in relation to the TEIP project. Bill reported that five member of staff were from Gypsy and Traveller communities and that they were employed on both the print and on-line version of the magazine. Whilst it might be argued that the magazine's ownership and management by the Rural Media Company, impacted on the level of community control, staff felt this arrangement had worked well by providing the magazine with the necessary expertise in financial and project management which experienced media professionals were able to bring to the project. Bill noted that, over time, opportunities were growing for Gypsies and Travellers working in the arts and media as well as in other associated ventures. Such projects (e.g. touring theatre companies; specialist radio programmes and art exhibitions) run by and involving community members, also enabled Gypsy and Traveller artists and practitioners to make important contributions to the industry working in partnership with Travellers' Times across a range of mediums.

A key lesson from the TT project is that significant levels of bridging capital can be developed and core skills developed and disseminated through the processes of non-community members working alongside

Gypsies and Travellers. In this way a symbiotic relationship is created between the staff. Gypsies and Travellers are contributing to the media product and learning transferable skills to enhance their employability and/or showcasing the work of other community members which increases overall community (bonding) capital, whilst media professionals are learning about Gypsy and Traveller communities and delivering a publication which is responsive to the needs and desires of the magazine's readers.

### **Local Community Groups**

\* Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group  
<http://www.dglg.org/>

\* Cheshire Gypsy and Travellers' Voice  
<http://www.travellersvoice.org/>

\* Lincolnshire Gypsy Liaison Group  
<http://www.lglg.co.uk>

\* York Travellers' Trust  
<http://www.yorktravellerstrust.org.uk/links.htm>

### **Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group**

Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group (DGLG) was formed in 1987, emerging from a 'home grown' community project rooted in a drive to develop sites in the Derby area. DGLG has an explicit remit of supporting equality of access to education and health care alongside promoting appropriate, community supported site development. The organisation was awarded the Queen's Jubilee award in 2003 and in 2004 a Home Office award for innovative police training. It also hosts and coordinates the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups.

The Coordinator of DGLG, Siobhan Spencer (MBE) is a Romany Gypsy; and the organisation consists of a mixed Gypsy/Traveller and non-community member management committee. DGLG operates with a small team of staff, the majority of whom are Romany Gypsies. Community members are also actively involved in the provision of voluntary support e.g. developing health and education projects, working on the production of culturally appropriate books and health promotion materials, etc

DGLG has gained a number of contracts for the provision of specialist service provision, advice

and training from general service providers (e.g. health and education) who recognise the value of the organisation's skills and wide-ranging community contacts. DGLG believe that access to such specialist contracts can provide an important source of revenue for many community groups if opportunities are grown and community skills are developed.

One significant economic inclusion project coordinated by DGLG, has the potential to have a trickle-down effect on both smaller community groups and individual Gypsies and Travellers. The 'training the trainers' programme, supports Gypsies and Travellers in developing and delivering cultural awareness sessions to service providers. The course is accredited by the University of Derbyshire and the award of university credits on completion of the course allows trainees to progress and gain further higher education qualifications. The course is delivered by Ann Emslie, who is from the Gypsy community and who also played a lead role in designing the course.

Siobhan notes that the course offers 'positive action' by targeting and tailoring the course for Gypsies and Travellers: thus both raising community members' confidence and qualification levels whilst assisting them in generating income as cultural awareness trainers.

A key lesson TEIP have identified from DGLG's work is the importance of developing innovative educational opportunities for community members alongside opportunities to make money and enhance their economic inclusion. Training the Trainers and other projects e.g. acting as research assistants for health projects or providing cultural awareness training for service providers creates a relatively rapid financial return for individuals and community groups who undertake courses as well as supporting participants and the wider Gypsy and Traveller community to recognize the positive outcomes of obtaining academic qualifications. The ground-breaking nature of DGLG's mentoring work is acknowledged within the following 'Good Practice' example.

### **Lincolnshire Gypsy Liaison Group**

Lincolnshire Gypsy Liaison Group (LGLG) was established in 2005. The organisation is supported by a management committee, of which three quarters are Gypsy and Traveller

community members. LGLG also receives invaluable expert support from non-community members. For example, the Treasurer is a retired tax inspector who is able to provide significant levels of expertise in the provision of business support training offered to community members.

A key figure in the organisation's establishment is Ryalla Duffy, coordinator of LGLG, a Romany Gypsy who has also worked in Traveller Education elsewhere in the country. Ryalla reported that she had found that a number of statutory and voluntary sector services within Lincolnshire required specific training to enable them to work with community members. In addition to the gap in professional knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller issues, LGLG found a large demand for advice and support from Gypsies and Travellers to assist them in engaging with service providers. Particular levels of need were found amongst community members who had literacy challenges or had experienced limited access to education.

Some of the services offered by LGLG include: education, training advice and support in accessing courses, on-site nursery and toddler services and support and advice on accommodation issues. LGLG also provides a number of voluntary opportunities for community members who are able to develop their skills through providing administrative support and help in delivering presentations and training. A cornerstone of LGLG's services is the provision of business start-up and support.

Commenting on this service, Ryalla stated:

*"We found many members of the Traveller community have been quite successful in running businesses not just for years but for generations. On an informal footing, they have done in-house training, in-house promotion, in-house canvassing for work and in-house acquisition of the job [skills] be it tarmacing...landscaping...roofing. The basic skills and the ability are very definitely there within the community, but sometimes we found that the delivery of those skills and the way that they are doing it just hasn't kept up with present times and they need a little bit of support to get the business up and running in 2009.*

*So they will come here and we will help them with it. We don't do everything here, but we can help them promote their business. That might mean advertising, it might mean going out and*

*canvassing areas it might mean using things like the internet, the local paper, the local radio or doing demonstrations of work somewhere, so we encourage them to do that. We encourage them as well to fully understand the current legislation. So for example they would need to know about the cold calling areas, about the 7-day cooling off period and what insurance the workers might need to use."*

An important aspect of the development of LGLG was the support provided by DGLG (see above). Setting up a new project involves significant bureaucratic hurdles and for LGLG, several changes of geographical location. Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group mentored the development of the new project by partnering LGLG within a Supporting People Project. Thus DGLG dealt with the bureaucracy of the project, enabling LGLG to undertake the delivery of the service.

Such partnerships are strongly recommended by management consultants working in third sector agencies (Dickinson and Glasby, 2010) as a means of enabling smaller groups to overcome the bureaucratic hurdles which can impede fledgling organisations from receiving larger grants and contracts for services. Ryalla described the practical implications of receiving such expert community led support:

*"In the end we did this in conjunction with Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group because LGLG hadn't got a proven track record for handling and budgeting large amounts of finance. It doesn't mean that we couldn't have done it. We didn't really want to manage that amount of money, that wasn't the area where our expertise lay. So we did a... joint initiative with Derbyshire whereby they actually did the payrolls and the things like staff insurance and liability insurance. They also gave us help with the myriad of policies that you need, so that was helpful and it was also good to have somebody else just to ask about things sometimes.*

*But it was also good in that we found our own way with things. So sometimes we would make mistakes, but it was OK because we learnt from our mistakes and sometimes we found completely new and innovative ways of doing things because we hadn't been given this rigid template to do this or do that."*

A key lesson from the LGLG project was that access to bonding capital creates a way of

disseminating knowledge which mirrors in-family skills training. The partnership experience of working with DGLG meant that the project could develop in an adaptive localised manner whilst utilising well tried and tested skills. The deceptively simple but effective use of business skills support and training for people working in the Traveller Economy offers the added value of up-skilling community members (including volunteers) with knowledge which can be used in other contexts whilst supporting traditional economic practices.

### Cheshire Gypsy and Travellers' Voice

Cheshire Gypsy and Travellers' Voice (CGTV) is a not-for-profit organisation which is working towards obtaining charitable status. Joe Hurn, the Chair of (CGTV) was interviewed for this study. Of the fifteen member management committee of CGTV, only four are not Gypsies and Travellers and the Officer posts (e.g. Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) are held by community members.

CGTV delivers a range of support and advocacy projects. In common with LGLG, the most important economic inclusion related activity offered by CGTV, is the delivery of business support services providing advice and guidance to Gypsies and Travellers on registration of businesses, regulatory requirements and associated advice and support.

This project has experienced considerable interest and is recognised as a model of good practice amongst other community groups. There is a high level of service uptake and Joe notes that CGTV is working to provide advice and information to other community groups to enable them to provide a similar service across the country:

*"We would like to do that [business inclusion] nationally one way or another - whether we take the lead on it or not. Our idea was to train other organisations up to do what we do - because we have a system which works very well and there [are] lots of other organisations around the country. They can do exactly the same on the financial side if they had the tools. We are in the position to give them the tools.... we could do wonders."*

CGTV employs a number of community members, including an apprentice and the

organisation hopes in the future to grow other paid training places where the developing worker can be integrated into the agency. CGTV employs positive action approaches when recruiting for staff and volunteers.

Ethnicity, however, is not an automatic qualification for the post (See below under Positive Action). Opportunities are also offered for volunteering and 15-20 community volunteers work within the organisation. However, in common with Yvonne McNamara of ITMB (see above), Joe feels that the wider Gypsy and Traveller community have yet to realise the full value and potential of volunteering:

*"A lot of Travellers don't understand volunteering. It is such a good tool to use to get Travellers involved and a potential way of eventually earning a decent job, we say to them OK you can work in a factory but you could be secretary. Loads of girls have so many skills and it is just wasted"*

The TEIP identified that CGTV's emphasis on working with volunteers who are provided with training opportunities, within a supportive organisation, offers a fast-track to economic and social inclusion for community members. The snowballing of training lessons and opportunities to other Gypsy and Traveller community groups reflects methods of information dissemination used within the traditional Traveller economy and enables sector-wide flexibility and responsiveness to community needs, whilst supporting the development of bonded and bridging capital.

### York Travellers' Trust (YTP)

York Travellers' Trust began life as a youth project, but 15 years ago, branched out to form a separate specialist community group offering advocacy and support work. In the past two years there has been an increasing focus on economic inclusion and the delivery of training.

The coordinator of YTP, Christine Shepherd, is a member of the Gypsy community, as is the other full time worker on the staff. Sessional workers are employed for specific projects and opportunities also exist for community volunteers to become involved. Christine felt that actively involving and where possible employing community members, can create valuable role models and opportunities but sounded a note of caution, warning that care needed to be taken when applying 'positive

action' in recruitment, as it is important to avoid tokenism:

*"I think there are a lot of advantages [employing staff] coming from the community because [they] might not have all the skills what we need but we can say "that is something that we can work on" and it can motivate other Travellers to do something else apart from cleaning.*

*I just think it is sad when I hear people come in and say 'oh well I just do cleaning'. [However] I know [that some] organisations have employed Gypsies and Travellers as workers [who don't have the appropriate skills or who aren't offered adequate training] but they done it for all the wrong reasons, it was like talk and gestures and it doesn't work - and that's what you've got to be very careful of."*

The increasing focus on training and education embedded within YTP's remit reflected the low literacy and education levels of York Traveller Trust's client group. Christine felt that supporting people to access courses held the potential to lift people out of low paid employment and raise their aspirations and economic status:

*"This is the thinking behind it - because for example, single mums now - with the changing legislation and benefits, they are really being pushed into work and what you've got to bear in mind, is some have never worked or been in employment ever, and all of a sudden they have a job and are clearly not ready for it... that is wrong to do. So you might as well give them their skills before encouraging them to go and get a job.*

*For me I think that is an important thing as well.... when you speak to the women what they say is 'I just want to get a cleaning job' and.....I think 'you've got more to offer than cleaning and you've got other skills' let's step into that. I think the problem is that they've never been encouraged to actually do anything. I think [in] the school environment or the college environment the community don't feel comfortable... but because this project is where they have been involved for many years, this is where they feel comfortable, this is where they feel safe. They are not intimidated by anything."*

A key lesson from the YTT project is that developing the literacy skills and confidence of service users through culturally appropriate support and the provision of relevant, non-threatening, community-led training and

education, enables marginalised Gypsies and Travellers to take steps towards social and economic inclusion. The 'safe environment' offered to service-users, volunteers and sessional workers leads to increased confidence and enhances their ability to engage with unfamiliar situations and avail of opportunities.

The key theme arising from all of the examples and interview data utilised within this section, is the fundamental importance of both up-skilling community members to enable them to engage in a range of roles which are often far removed from 'traditional' employment practices, and in ensuring that such training is delivered in a supportive manner. Greenfields (2007) in an 'Aim Higher' commissioned research study, found that participants reported that training delivered in a community setting, which took account of cultural practices and expectations, and which enabled Gypsies and Travellers to be supported by other participants from their own background and ethnicity, was regarded as the optimum learning environment.

The examples of policy transfer, good practice sharing and community dissemination of skills detailed above, quite clearly follow this model and must in part account for the projects' success, in enhancing the economic inclusion and social capital networks of participants.

### **Funding Issues for Third Sector/Community Groups**

A key finding from the interview data was that access to secure and on-going funding was a key determinant as to whether community groups were able to employ Gypsies and Travellers or run projects that could increase their economic inclusion through the provision of flexible and tailored support. Where funds were extremely limited or ring-fenced for short-term or dedicated projects, a greater likelihood existed that skilled professionals (who may not be community members) would be taken on to undertake the core elements of project work as they could potentially be regarded as 'low risk' having already obtained a considerable level of experience prior to employment and requiring less supervision and support than an individual who was in the process of skills development.

The model referred to in several case studies for developing 'niche' training opportunities involves supporting community members to



access qualifications and training and then replicating these practices in other localities (see above case study examples of CGTV and DGLG) which enables community groups to offer a 'package' to health authorities or other public sector bodies who wish to engage with local Gypsy and Traveller groups. The presence of a training/consultancy package which can be adapted to local conditions, backed by the reputation of 'core brand' agencies with a reputation for good practice, which validate and support smaller community groups (see, the LGLG example above) acts as a 'guarantee', in encouraging funders to support agencies, who insist on the presence of community members in key roles within teams.

As has been identified by a number of interviewees/within case studies, the emphasis on positive action (see further below) will in due course ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are able to fulfil a full range of roles within agencies as their skills develop alongside their confidence. One important outcome of the policy shift initiated by the previous (Labour) administration is demonstrated by the fact that less than a decade ago, only a very limited number of Gypsies and Travellers were employed by community groups. That number is now approaching triple figures and unless significant financial constraints occur (see further below, in relation to 'Big Society' initiatives) this appears set to continue to increase dramatically, (as demonstrated by the case studies relating to staffing at national organisations such as FFT and ITMB). Not only is this trend a reflection of the increased skills of community members (enhanced by the opportunities to engage in volunteering within agencies) and positive action in recruitment, but also a reflection of the increased recognition by funders that Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are highly excluded groups in need of support.

Despite this growth in funding opportunities for community groups and services, funding continues to be an issue. Whilst the developing 'Big Society' model may well create new opportunities, at the time of writing, it is unclear how monetary restrictions may impact upon small groups who receive partial funding from local authorities or central government grants. Smaller community groups, even prior to recent spending restrictions, all report struggling to secure the funding they need to develop their organisations and run the projects as they would like, and thus any risk analysis must take

account of the current financial uncertainty.

Most of the groups we have considered within the TEIP report were predominantly dependent on charitable funding, but Chris Whitwell noted that FFT had received forty percent of its present income from Government sources in recent years, enabling the organisation to develop and grow. He felt that the stability of such funding was important in clarifying objectives and developing policy and project direction, and hoped that this process would continue despite the change of Government in 2010.

Amongst some third sector groups, there was considerable frustration that local authorities were not more proactive in financially backing local schemes and initiatives to support Gypsies and Travellers, despite the references to the community within local equality schemes. In such circumstances, it was felt that tokenism and a tick-box culture was enabling local authorities and statutory agencies to claim the involvement of Gypsies and Travellers in local projects without actually delivering on promises. One community group was extremely frustrated that Gypsies and Travellers had not been targeted and funded in a Local Area Agreement, even though Gypsies and Travellers were noted to be one of the largest and most excluded ethnic minorities in that area.

In contrast, one local authority service provider noted the value of a community support group, in assisting them to deliver work to local Gypsies and Travellers. The group in that area had been staffed by Gypsy and Traveller community members under local authority finance and management. Unfortunately, local authority funding constraints led to the closure of the project adding to the sense of exclusion experienced by some community members.

It is worth noting that despite the showcasing of the good practice examples within this chapter, in a considerable number of areas in the country no local Gypsy and Traveller projects exist. This is despite the fact that 92% of local authorities report the presence of GRTs residing or passing through the locality (CRE, 2006). To a large extent the failure to support the growth of such projects is a product of a lack of political will (see Richardson, 2007) as, if the opportunities afforded by equality schemes were utilised it would be possible to provide funding and capacity building support for

such projects through prioritising them within Local Area Agreements. Thus, the absence of such initiatives not only denies Gypsies and Travellers important training and employment opportunities, but also access to effective support services which deepens the likelihood of economic exclusion for marginalised community members.

Whilst obvious hazards therefore exist for smaller, localised Gypsy and Traveller projects, emerging opportunities also exist for community groups to link with local enterprise partnerships (see Chapter 12) which could lead to more secure funding for small groups, as well as enabling the delivery of appropriate tailored services which will enhance economic inclusion within the local area.

In addition to being dependent upon access to funding, the successful establishment of new community groups is also heavily dependent on guidance and support from established agencies who may potentially be in a position to play an even greater role in supporting the sector with the development of the 'Big Society' agenda. Interviewees cited a number of key organisations who were involved in supporting and developing capacity building amongst community groups.

In addition to registered charity/ independent grant maker/broker The Travellers' Aid Trust (TAT), Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT), National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups (NFGLG), The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (ITMB) and Northern Network for Travelling People (NNTP) were all regarded as key players in the development of establishing organisations with a solid infrastructure. Indeed the last three agencies have received support from the Government's 'Change Up' programme through the 'Capacity Builders' initiative with the aim of developing generic infrastructural support for frontline voluntary and community organisations and social enterprise groups. In addition, TAT has been active in brokering specialist infrastructural training and expert assistance through developing a network of charitable funders who are eager to support Traveller led projects.

Despite the welcome and significant improvement in funding for GRT community development in recent years, it remains questionable whether without developing new and innovative funding strategies (e.g.

membership of local enterprise partnerships or the provision of specialist services which generate income) the successful community groups listed in this Chapter (and even less, the smaller community led organisations) will be able to sustain the degree of community organisation, development and enterprise enjoyed by many other ethnic minority groups should the funding climate become less favourable.

The relatively small baseline of community groups and entrepreneurial nature of many GRT community activists represents a threat to growth which could impede the ability of third sector groups to increase in size and continue to employ a similar number of community employees, as compared with other similarly sized ethnic minority agencies. Should public/ charitable funding decline significantly it is likely (in common with the whole charitable/ voluntary sector) that there will be a decrease in the number of specialist Gypsy/Traveller community organizations. However, with the enhanced skills base of many workers/ volunteers, the potential exists for staff who are newly seeking work, to make the transition into more 'mainstream' third sector roles and bring their expertise in working with their community to other projects,

### ***Positive Action and the Development of Employment Opportunities***

We have considered a number of ways of enhancing employability and upskilling community members. One significant way of ensuring that the pool of trained and experienced GRT community members are supported in accessing employment, is to utilise the tools of 'positive action' (see further Chapter 2 and above). Positive Action involves employers specifically targeting recruitment and welcoming applicants from disadvantaged groups, as well as tailored initiatives for key client groups. A range of other actions such as specialist training, mentoring and 'championing' schemes, outreach work, confidence building workshops together with identification of knowledge and experience of working with the community may also be utilised as a key requirement in employment selection. Each of the organisations selected as good practice models in this chapter, operate some forms of 'positive action' which it is believed has contributed to the economic inclusion of

<sup>2</sup> The principles behind the initiative and the title of the programme have also inspired the title of this report

individual Gypsies and Travellers as well as enhancing group-based opportunities.

In many cases, the positive action initiatives have been developed within innovative projects. In turn, snowballing of information and inter-agency knowledge transfer has permitted the newly learned lessons to be developed and built upon, within a local context. Thus for example, courses such as 'training the trainers', the recruitment of sessional workers, the development of tailored business support and the recruitment of Gypsy and Traveller staff have all become common to a number of GRT led organisations.

A common factor in the recruitment policies of all agencies discussed above, involves emphasising within job descriptions the requirement for a high level of community knowledge. This pre-requisite not only enables the ideal candidate to 'hit the ground running' but also clearly advantages Gypsies and Travellers applicants who are likely to already possess a wide range of relevant skills, which they have developed through campaigning and voluntary work.

Joe Hurn (Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Voice) expressed the benefits of being legally able to utilise positive action in recruitment processes:

*"Everything we do is getting towards that [positive action]. As soon as they come through the door we help them with everything - from literacy to IT skills - just to give them a little bit extra.....what everyone [else] takes for granted because where they come from.... We won't employ a Traveller person just because he is a Traveller.... if they're fit for it, it's fantastic, if they are not - why aren't they? [We think] 'Let's get them some skills, let's get them trained up' so they would be as equal as anybody else walking through the door [and] entitled for that job."*

Flexibility, imagination and innovation can therefore contribute greatly to 'positive action' approaches, a stance supported by the statutory service providers profiled who reported utilising flexible means of recognising alternative forms of qualifications and life-skills obtained. Many statutory sector agencies reported feeling that such was the disadvantage of young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers that access onto mainstream courses and training was not always as practical as offering a first stage supported placement.

In response to the low level of academic skills of many clients and potential staff, Leeds GRTAS utilised the ability to offer flexible educational provision which is common to TES and Connexions services and developed a course designed for those who have been alienated from the education system - the 'Futures Programme'. The training was based on the pedagogical practices of Paolo Friere and built upon a similar course developed by Pavee Point in Dublin. The 'Futures Programme' promoted interactive student-centred learning activities which, in addition to opportunities to improve literacy skills, involved video production, photography and dimensions of self-development. The course was marketed as targeted at Gypsy and Traveller young people but is also intended to act as a 'stepping stone' into mainstream education and training.

David Scott of Connexions outlined the importance of engaging with cultural practices in order to support young people into education:

*"...the community don't fit into the everyday settled remit of ....'you've got to do 38 weeks in a college' .. when you are from the Traveller community you go away, you have other things that are your priority. [The course] It is fitting it in within their lifestyle pattern and their cultural beliefs as well. It is targeted, it is helping mainstream providers and schools to be more adaptable and flexible in their approach and [access to] funding does help because you can set it up around the community's needs, it does work."*

Whilst this particular programme has been tailored to assist young people and specifically designed to act as a bridge to mainstream provision the potential exists to develop such projects for adult learners. A recent initiative developed in partnership between Buckinghamshire New University and Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust and funded by the Buckinghamshire Community Foundation has provided Gypsy women in the locality with the initial skills sets to work as community health advocates, utilising just such a flexible approach to supporting learners and developing training materials which do not require high levels of literacy.

Despite the success of such specialist training and educational programmes, some practitioners and community members remain concerned about the sustainability of such an approach. David Scott (Doncaster Connexions) was sensitive to the danger of targeted

measures encouraging separatism and thus possibly perpetrating inequalities, warning that care was needed to ensure on-site or provision which is not integrated is temporary and merely a stepping stone to mainstream provision. Additionally, Kim Tolley (CREDS), whilst applauding innovative approaches to economic inclusion and the recognition that community needs had to inform project development remained sceptical of the ability of many statutory and mainstream services to work in such innovative ways, citing the financial and workload pressures which constrain such specialist targeted initiatives.

In contrast, some community activists are relatively optimistic that new opportunities will emerge within the developing Big Society agenda, suggesting that the emphasis on partnership, community enterprise and innovation may enable traditional Traveller skills associated with 'identifying a market' to come to the fore, and free up Traveller entrepreneurs to develop new social enterprises and training opportunities.

Since the election of the Coalition Government in Summer 2010 forward thinking Gypsy and Traveller entrepreneurs and groups have already begun to consider the opportunities afforded by the new policy emphasis and to discuss the potential for developing social enterprise run Gypsy/Traveller sites; engaging with new models of co-operatively owned community land trusts providing work/living space (CLTs see further in Chapter 12); the opportunities afforded for engaging with local enterprise partnerships and the development of credit unions to support and finance Gypsy and Traveller employment ventures.

Whilst economic opportunities and constraints are likely to change considerably in the months ahead, requiring innovation and flexibility on the part of community groups who wish to develop new projects. However, analysis of the key elements of good practice highlighted by community activists and utilised within self-sustaining and effective agencies has enabled TEIP to develop a 'blue-skies' model of a self-sustaining 'ideal type' community group which we present below:

### ***A Model Community Group***

Whilst individual and localised models will require flexibility and tailoring of certain elements to meet community needs and the existing skills base within the service, it is suggested that successful local Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community groups may (in the future) incorporate some or all of the following features, which include provision for employment opportunities as well as access to skills development and business support for volunteers and staff alike:

#### **Governance**

Trustees – minimum of 50 percent from the GRT community OR an advisory group composed primarily of community members which focuses on broad strategic decisions and campaign decisions working in partnership with a 'professionalised' Board of Trustees.

#### **Services**

Policy activities and 'Community Voice' activities as well as direct welfare/economic/training services including:

- \* Business Support in association with Business Links.
- \* Welfare Support (helplines/ case work)
- \* Development of Partnership agreements with statutory service providers providing outreach/ mediation and support for the Jobcentre, health services, Traveller Education Service, Connexions, local training and education institutions. The provision of consultation and research based (primarily) on local authority planning issues and race and economic equality duties.
- \* Direct service provision e.g. training run from a social action centre.

The above would be mapped out in local area agreements and compacts.

## Staff

\* At least 50 percent Gypsy, Roma, Traveller staff (recruited through positive action initiatives).

\* Staff development would be offered to address education and skills gaps and to support possible progression to management roles through specifically designed training course.

## Volunteers

\* Structured and rewarded volunteering opportunities based on a written volunteering contract and regularly reviewed policy – leading to skills progression and eventual employment

## Funding

\* A mix of local (reflected in local area agreement) and central Government finance provided in response to the services provided (e.g. via Central Departments responsible for Education, Office of Civil Society, Communities and Local Government and the Department of Work and Pensions).

\* Charitable donations

\* Self-generated income through service provision and social enterprise.

## **Conclusions - Opportunity and Constraint: Personalisation and the Big Society**

This report has been produced against a backdrop of profound political and economic change which is likely to impact significantly on the opportunities available to both members of 'mainstream' society and even more so, those at the margins of economic inclusion. The profiles of good practice within statutory and voluntary sector agencies explored within this chapter reveal both the profound changes that have taken place in the last thirty years, and also, the developing potential for community based employment driven by the growth of positive role models and available economic inclusion, education and training support opportunities.

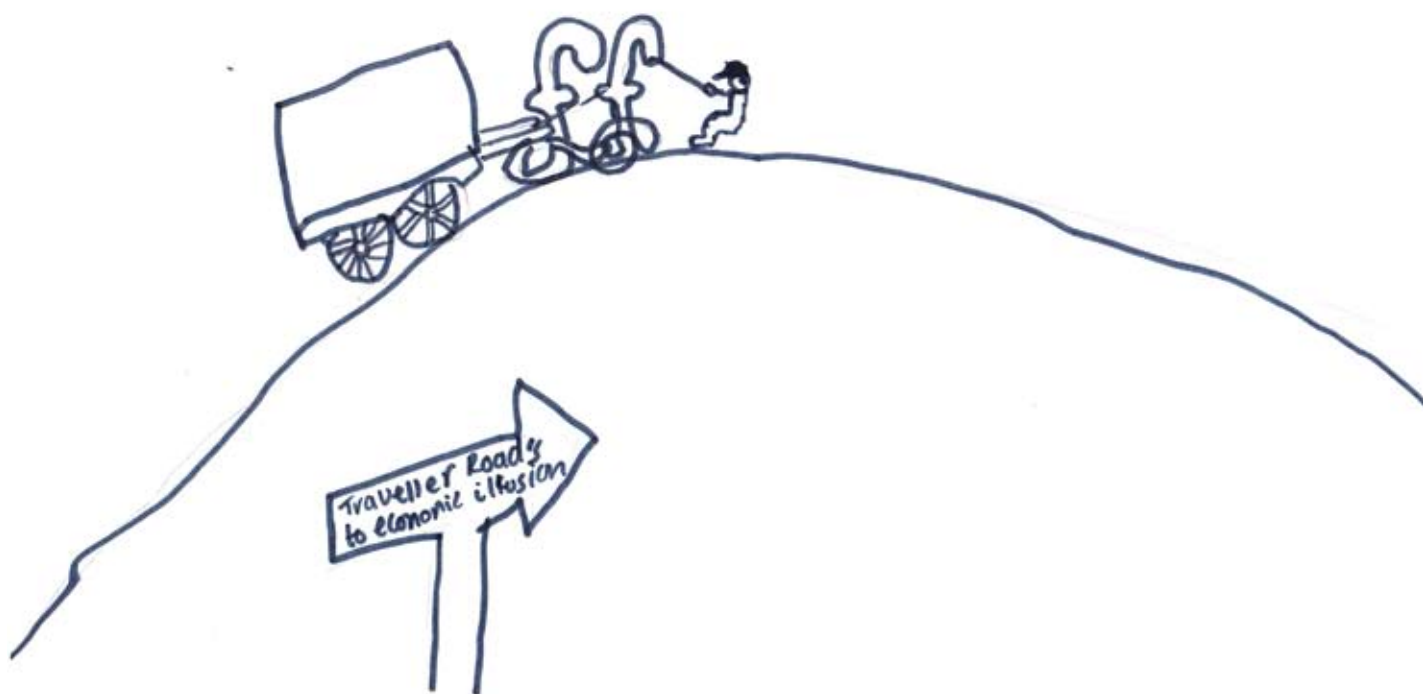
Throughout this research, community groups have stressed the importance of positive action and flexibility in designing strategies to raise economic and social inclusion for

Gypsies and Travellers. An ever present theme has been the emphasis on the key dynamic in successful engagement – that of community involvement in the delivery and design of services. Although certain lessons can be drawn from studies of the economic development of other minority groups, much still remains to be learnt in relation to GRT economies and the interplay between different populations and fields of endeavour. However, the knowledge base pertaining to the evolving field of GRT economic development is benefiting from the increased dissemination and sharing of good practice by the pioneering groups featured above.

However, it is self-evident that the development of economic opportunities via the auspices of community projects, are hostages to fortune within the current fiscal climate. Many of the innovative developments within third sector agencies are in tune with policies of 'personalisation' which are being promoted by Central Government with the intent of improving both service levels and targeted responses to client groups. Acton (1997) argues that Gypsies and Travellers are the ultimate bricoleurs,

gathering and gaining knowledge from each new set of circumstances they encounter. In responding to changing policy approaches and opportunities (not least those which will arise from the Coalition Government's advocacy of a model of a 'Big Society' where community groups are to be given a central role in addressing the needs of their communities), it is likely that innovative community groups working in partnership with Gypsy and Traveller entrepreneurs will be able to maximise the advantages which they have so painstakingly gained in recent years. However, (as considered within the following chapter) certain pitfalls and hurdles may need to be overcome, in order that relatively 'youthful' Gypsy and Traveller led projects may safely negotiate the newly evolving terrain of rolled-back statutory sector provision and expectations of community service delivery within a climate of economic constraint.





# ***Chapter Twelve***

***Policy and Practice: Recommendations and Conclusions***

## Chapter Twelve

### Policy and Practice: Recommendations and Conclusions

The preceding chapters have explored the changing nature of, and challenges to, Gypsy and Traveller employment patterns, considering the function of social capital and existing organisational 'good practice' initiatives on financial inclusion. In addition we have considered the impacts on 'traditional' and 'innovative' work practices of access to accommodation and educational opportunities and examined how this has changed across the generations.

Within this concluding chapter the research findings and current interlocking policy debates are drawn together to posit answers to the series of questions posed at the beginning of the report. We undertake this exercise with the intent of enabling a conversation to occur in relation to how the impacts of decades of deepening social exclusion can be mitigated through positive action and the tailored expansion of existing initiatives.

The chapter concludes with a summary of recommendations (some of which are easily initiated whilst others involve more 'blue-skies' thinking and detailed responses and long-term planning) which can be embedded into policy documents to continue the discussion on Gypsy and Traveller economic inclusion across a range of domains.

#### Key Questions

- \* How have some Gypsies and Travellers achieved economic success?
- \* What is the influence and importance of individual and group traits (e.g. gender, age, educational participation, types of accommodation occupied and access to different types of social networks) on the likelihood of economic inclusion?
- \* How do Gypsies and Travellers define 'success'?

The TEIP has found that for some interviewees 'traditional' Traveller employment practices continue to offer a viable means to secure economic success (e.g. through expanding on scrap metal or building/gardening work; or branching out into new forms of 'traditional'

enterprise). Where this type of activity has been followed successfully, it has allowed some interviewees to develop lucrative businesses. People engaged in these types of economic activity are typically able to access close networks where bonding capital and family connections support their ability to remain self-employed. We have identified however that access to stable accommodation is virtually a prerequisite to enjoyment of financial success within this model of economic engagement.

Utilising their unique economic and cultural organisations to engage with the 'Traveller economy' Gypsy and Traveller families who are financially successful within this employment mode have forged a way of life that is to a degree autonomous and distinct from the modern 'market economy'; engaging with an economic model that provides families with a degree of self-control and independence which is often not evident in waged employment. Such is the value placed on the retention of traditional (in some cases 'conservative' see further Acton, 1974) lifestyles, within the Gypsy and Traveller communities, that even if in 'mainstream' terms many individuals and families working in the Traveller economy may not appear to have achieved significant economic success, the ability to retain a traditional yet secure (sited, caravan-dwelling) way of life and earn enough money to support a family with relative ease, is regarded as a marker of success, conferring significant cultural capital (Greenfields, 2010) amongst the families who are able to fulfil such commonly held aspirations (see further, Chapters 4 and 8).

Despite the tendency for 'traditional' Gypsies and Travellers to report such aspirations (see further Greenfields, 2008 for a discussion of adolescent boy's career preferences), conceptions of success are shifting and acculturating so that the 'gold standard' is no longer pure or semi-nomadism and a small business, but also encompasses the attainment of relevant training/education and access to new forms of capital or business opportunities. To what extent this new model will supplant traditional conceptions of success is likely to depend on whether interactions with wider 'mainstream' society and institutions are found to be positive and fruitful.

However, the contraction of the Traveller economy cannot be ignored and for some community members, brings declining incomes

which are interpreted as a sign of both cultural and economic failure. The continual decline of 'traditional' economic opportunities, when not offset by skills development and measures directed at innovative revival of work practices which exploit the strength of the 'bonding' capital within the community, may (as argued elsewhere in this report), lead to significant cultural changes that many Gypsies and Travellers would argue are detrimental to their identity and survival.

For interviewees who have stepped outside of the 'traditional' Traveller Economy and who have entered into waged employment, this transition has frequently presented significant cultural challenges and thrown up barriers to progression e.g. literacy difficulties or the absence of a lengthy CV which demonstrates no gaps in education or employment history. Interviewees in community roles had been especially successful at adapting to new work environments and have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the projects in which they are employed.

Across the sample, perhaps the clearest changes and innovations have taken place in relation to gender and economic roles and activities, reflected in a movement towards wage labour within the formal employment sector for women. Indications exist to suggest that some women have made the transition because of concerns over the viability of traditional Traveller economies. In terms of gender roles, there is still some evidence of cultural employment restrictions but these appear to be in transition, affording women greater opportunities to develop and create new economic roles. This cultural innovation in response to changing circumstances reflects the integral flexibility of Gypsy and Traveller cultures (and also changing practices common to other communities or localities where men had been employed predominantly in declining manual trades) which has a history of effective response to external pressures. For some women who have taken their first steps into waged labour the transition has proved extremely satisfying, even when externally they would appear to be employed in low income and relatively low skilled employment fields. The TEIP would however argue that it is essential to provide improved training opportunities so that for those people who wish to expand their work opportunities, a progression can be made from relatively unskilled work (which can thus be

used as a 'stepping stone') to greater economic inclusion and the acquisition of other cultural, social and economic capitals (Bourdieu, 1986).

However, positive change is not just a question of personal agency. That is, determination and ambition are hugely important, but success is also a matter of the opportunity and equality that wider society is willing to afford to members of these minority groups. For many talented individuals discrimination has blocked entry into new economic activities. The TEIP found that discrimination based on address and ethnicity was most pronounced for Gypsies and Travellers living on sites and who were trying to secure work in waged employment. Evidence of discrimination was most evident in the education system where 55% of G/IT interviewees reported that they had experienced racism.

Long-term impacts of discrimination impact on access to services but also the trust and confidence that Gypsies have in the wider community and ease they might feel at attending a literacy skills class; discussing future prospects with a job seekers' advisor or entering a new workplace. Changes in public perceptions of Gypsies and Travellers, together with more open services, will have a key impact on the economic and social prospects of Gypsies and Travellers. The TEIP team believe that greater awareness by the general public of the broad variety of roles performed by Gypsies, Roma and Travellers will do much to challenge negative stereotypes and contribute towards enhanced levels of community cohesion.

Ethnic groups are not rigid entities. The boundaries that separate them from outsiders and confirm identity for members are constantly being reinterpreted and remade (Hall, 1991). Despite change and acculturation, cultural differences can persist alongside inter-ethnic contact and interdependence. Thus it was evident from the finding of the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project that some interviewees could adapt and innovate in life strategies yet still ascribed strongly as Gypsies and Travellers. For others though, the mistrust, fear and rejection of mainstream society, has also contributed to the preservation of Gypsy and Traveller cultural identity. The Traveller Economic Inclusion Project indicates that Gypsy and Traveller identity may be in a state of flux and reorientation. Dramatic change in economic opportunities and restrictions on nomadism

have prompted or compelled some working in this employment sector to take new directions or exist in social environments that are new and challenging. Levels of discrimination and racism and the success of those that adopt traditional life strategies or new and innovative strategies will determine which direction a greater number of this community take in terms of choice of economic activity, participation in education and training and business support. However, effective and inclusive change and adaptation needs to be freely chosen and negotiated. This report has argued that imposed change in the past has been counter-productive. Indeed such enforced attempts at assimilation have often been actively resisted, by accentuated 'distancing', leading to the lack of trust which has impacted so negatively in the levels of interaction with wider society and uptake of key services such as education.

As has been evidenced throughout the report, bonding social capital has helped to sustain the Traveller Economy with in-family training acting as a source of self-help in the face of acute exclusion. Those who subscribe to a 'communitarian' discourse suggest that strong forms of social capital centred on families can create social cohesion and increase social inclusion (Etzioni, 1993). However, critics argue that such coping mechanisms cannot overcome the exclusion caused by an unequal distribution of resources. At best, social capital operationalised through self-help networks, can only mitigate the negative effect of exclusion for the marginalised, with such networks in themselves not posing a major challenge to cycles of poverty (Smith, 2005). The TEIP would concur with this point and whilst acknowledging the strength of bonding social capital would emphasise that it cannot in itself overcome exclusion and the problems outlined in this report. Hence there is a need for major policy interventions and new partnerships.

### Key Questions

- \* To what degree have Gypsies and Travellers been assisted by current policies
- \* Where can policies be reformed or appropriately implemented to facilitate greater economic inclusion?

The TEIP report was written during a period of dramatic policy change brought about by the formation of a Coalition Government in

the summer of 2010. In the following section the TEIP assesses the impact of the previous Labour government's policies on increasing social exclusion amongst Gypsies and Travellers and seeks to evaluate the impact of new and emerging Coalition Government policy. To frame this discussion we explore the context of inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers and the equalities legislation which may hold the potential to increasing social and economic inclusion for these groups.

### Equalities Issues

The TEIP found high levels of discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers in the workplace and amongst the community with 78% of the G/IT sample stating they had experienced racism. The Equality Act (2010) which affirms public bodies' duty to deliver equality in services and prohibits discrimination in employment was acclaimed by Labour politicians as an effective tool for delivering change and supporting the inclusion of all marginalised communities and individuals. The Coalition Government has affirmed its support for this legislation (BBC, 3rd July 2010) enacting the legislation after they came to power. Despite this broad cross-party support, pressure groups have expressed concern that the Act will replace the specific duties on race (e.g the Race Relations Act Amendment 2000) and will enable public bodies to set their own equality agendas and objectives. The Black Manifesto has stated that the imposition of the single equalities duty is therefore a regressive step and believes that the specific race equality duties should be retained (BM, 2010). For the provisions of the Single Equality duty to be effective, strong monitoring mechanisms will need to be in place with increased prospects of prosecution for non-compliance. Here the Equality and Human Rights Commission will have an important role to play which, if it is to protect Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, will warrant greater levels of engagement and dialogue with GRT communities and a more proactive enforcement role.

To meet this anticipated challenge a coalition of race groups have called for a statutory committee on race to be established within the EHRC to ensure a stronger focus on race equality and to develop a business plan for government on race issues (BM, 2010). Traveller groups have supported this call and stressed

the importance of Traveller representation on such a committee (ITMB, 2007). The TEIP supports these recommendations believing that such engagement would create greater equality between race and other domains of exclusion (e.g. gender and disability) which have been accorded greater institutional influence through discrete structures within the EHRC. In addition as the TEIP has argued throughout this report, effective policy engagement necessitates community 'buy in' with minority groups identifying and believing that they have the ability to shape policies and thus achieve empowerment.

### ***Data Monitoring for Equalities Purposes***

An important lever for the promotion of equalities is access to accurate data on the nature and zones of location of exclusion and discrimination. As we have repeatedly noted (see further Appendix A) Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are absent from key administrative datasets, for example the Labour force survey; or information on take-up to Benefits.

One mechanism for remedying this lack of information used in other contexts, has been the use of 'booster surveys' which focus explicitly on the experiences of minorities as well as conducting wider and more mainstream surveys. We would recommend that 'booster surveys' are used to explore the specific circumstances of GRT communities in relation to economic inclusion. This 'invisibility' of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers is widespread, and thus, for example, when the Small Business Service (which is supported by the Department for Business and Innovation Skills) carried out a survey of ethnic minority businesses (Whitehead et al, 2006) it did not include Gypsies and Travellers as a survey category despite the prevalence of members of these communities working as self-employed tradespeople. The TEIP has also identified that Gypsies and Travellers are not included in ethnic monitoring categories by other key agencies such as Business Links, further education institutions or Jobcentre Plus.

Accordingly the TEIP would argue that that there is an urgent need for booster surveys to be undertaken which include RGT people, and for robust ethnic monitoring exercises to be undertaken by employers which include Gypsies Roma and Travellers as a compulsory

category. The inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in the 2011 census is to be welcomed but historic levels of racism and resultant reticence by some respondents in relation to revealing their identity may weaken the impact and relevance of findings.

The EHRC report on the Equality Measurement Framework (EHRC, 2010) has considered whether it is indeed practical to include Gypsies and Travellers in mainstream datasets because of the distinct differences in their lifestyles and experiences as well as the relatively small size of communities. The EHRC has instead concluded that specifically focused research (promoted and supported by the Commission) will be required (EHRC, 2010). The TEIP team endorses this proposal and urges that such booster surveys are undertaken as a matter of urgency.

### ***Socio- Economic Duties within the Act and Supporting Economic Inclusion***

The socio-economic duty within the Single Equality Act which the Coalition Government has decided not to implement required public authorities with strategic duties to consider the impact of socio-economic disadvantage when planning and monitoring their services (Guardian, 17th November, 2010). The TEIP is disappointed that this duty will not be introduced as believe that it would force statutory bodies to inevitably pay greater attention to the economic and social exclusion suffered by Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. Nevertheless it is hoped that over time, there will be greater Governmental policy around the domains of economic exclusion and potentially the development and delivery of targeted initiatives by agencies such as the Department for Work and Pension. At a more localised level, (and subject to political goodwill, it is hoped that authorities may prioritise policies which increase Gypsy and Traveller economic inclusion, reflecting this concern for economic well-being in local area agreements which specifically refer to the needs of GRT minorities. At the regional/local level Regional Development Agencies/Local Enterprise Partnerships could be a vehicle to develop general economic profiles (and targeted initiatives for) Gypsies and Travellers in their regions.



We had noted (Chapter Four) that the existing nine English RDA/Business Links have to date paid virtually no attention to Gypsy and Traveller issues, the proposed regional economic profiles could draw on data obtained from GTANAs or through conducting supplementary surveys to identify the needs of GRT populations. CLG guidance on GTANAs is shortly to be revised (CLG, [correspondence] 2010) offers the potential to provide greater encouragement and advice on the topics to be included in such surveys, or to make recommendations that supplementary research should be carried out on areas relevant to economic inclusion (see further Appendix B). We would note however, that as with GTANAs, in order to successfully obtain data on the subject of socio-economic inclusion GRT community support will be required and this is likely to be dependent upon community involvement in data collection and interpretation (CLG, 2007), albeit that trust in the outcomes of such surveys has anecdotally been severely diminished as a result of the abolition of targets for site provision under regional special strategies.

### ***Resourcing Equality actions – the need for political commitment***

Centuries of persecution and neglect (Mayall, 2001) have combined to cause acute exclusion for GRT minorities and a level of collective trauma (Richardson and Ryder, 2010) which has left a deep legacy of mistrust and anxiety. As evidenced throughout this report some community members have responded by distancing themselves from mainstream society. For these community members, profound social dislocation has left a growing legacy of economic exclusion but also low levels of civic engagement; poor access to services and diminished life chances reflected in the lowest levels of educational achievement and highest mortality rates in British society (CRE 2006). It has been argued that the exclusion experienced by GRT people is similar in nature and degree to that endured by Aborigines and Native Americans (Cemlyn et., al., 2009). It is self-evident that concrete measures are required to reverse the deeply entrenched discrimination and exclusion chronicled within this report.. As we have highlighted, important inclusion initiatives are already emerging from amongst Gypsy Roma and Traveller community organisations and many of the solutions to exclusion can also be found within the

communities. However, in order to activate the potential inherent within the GRT communities, access to resources and, structural and policy change are required. That abundant social, cultural and economic capital exists within Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities is self-evident, as evidenced by the vibrant initiatives considered within this report.

In Chapter One we explicitly rejected the (popular media-advanced) argument that Gypsy and Traveller social exclusion is a product of inherent moral flaws within the population (the moral underclass discourse - MUD). Within this concluding chapter we propose that the social integrationist discourse model (SID) which advocates skills development alone as a response to exclusion is also unlikely to adequately address the depth of exclusion experienced by many members of these communities. Accordingly we advocate the use of a mixed model, comprising support for culturally appropriate community-driven economic and educational activities and entrepreneurial social enterprise, perhaps delivered through local enterprise partnerships alongside a Government-supported emphasis on policy initiatives which seek to address skills short-falls; reduce welfare dependency; enhance access to appropriate accommodation and economic activities and increase educational attainment amongst GRT populations. We propose moreover that with adequate infrastructural support and access to resources the network of existing and emerging GRT community groups will be well placed to support their peers in accessing services and achieving inclusion in a way which fulfills the 'vision' of the coalition government's Big Society agenda.

### ***Accommodation***

As has been considered within Chapter 8 access to secure accommodation (whether sited or, for those who so desire, in housing) is an important contributing factor to economic success, providing Gypsies and Travellers with the stability to develop their businesses or to seek employment in the waged sector as well as enabling access to education, training and essential health services. The centrality of secure accommodation to 'success' across many domains cannot be over-emphasised as an effective mechanism for supporting individuals to engage in economic, cultural and social

activities rather than becoming dependant on welfare benefits and/or socially isolated..

Policies and initiatives put in place by the previous Government have been widely regarded as offering the potential to deliver much needed sites and address the national shortage although there had been much criticism of the pace of delivery (CLG Task Group, 2007) and lack of (local) political will (Richardson, 2007). Amongst many Gypsies and Travellers (particularly those who are activists) there is a fear that recent reforms to these policies which remove regional targets and promote localism by allowing local authorities to determine provision (CLG, 28th August, 2010) will cause further delay to pitch delivery and will reduce the number of sites constructed (Avebury et al, 2010). Recent Government announcements have however indicated that local authorities are to be offered incentives to deliver new Traveller sites, through the "new homes bonus scheme", and grant funding for local authorities to deliver new sites will resume in 2011, (Hansard, 27th October, 2010 written answers, House of Lords) mitigating some concern, although as yet, it is not possible to quantify the extent and pace of delivery.

The TEIP has argued that there is potential for huge economic and social gains where increased site provision occurs. Not only may extended Gypsy and Traveller families benefit from a wave of site construction, thus gaining security and stability in their lives and the freedom to focus on economic activities, but such site development also holds the potential to deliver employment to community members in the construction, development and site management industries. In chapter six the TEIP illustrated that a number of Gypsy and Traveller social entrepreneurs already possess the skills and experience to perform such roles and that (see Chapter Eleven) training and development opportunities will increase the pool of individuals with such abilities.

In relation to delivery of accommodation these opportunities could be facilitated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The Agency is now responsible for the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant that funds new social rented sites as well as helping to pay for the refurbishment of existing social rented sites. The HCA 2009 funding guidelines state that the Agency wishes to encourage the development of innovative solutions for site provision

that could help: speed up delivery, improve standards and value for money, and provide better outcomes. Accordingly the potential exists within the programme to encompass a wide range of schemes and radical approaches to procurement and delivery, using public funding to facilitate the development of self-build and low cost owner occupied sites. The emphasis within the HCA guidelines is to encourage organisations to be proactive, and to work with the Gypsy and Traveller community to develop innovative schemes, a process which some projects identified within the TEIP are exceptionally well situated to undertake. The HCA believes such schemes could assist in meeting demand from Gypsies and Travellers to own their own homes (see further Chapter 8 for a summary of TEIP findings on this topic), where the cost of achieving this aspiration is otherwise prohibitive. As well as potentially utilising the building skills of some members of the Gypsy and Traveller community, such schemes would provide better value for money than social rented provision (HCA Guidelines, 2009).

The TEIP suggests that some Gypsies and Travellers may wish to form themselves into co-operatives or Community Land Trusts (CLTs) which are locally-based not-for-profit organisations that own land and property in trust for the benefit of a defined community.

CLTs are increasingly recognised as one possible means of overcoming the widespread problems of social exclusion and unaffordable housing caused by escalating land values in the UK. As well as ensuring long-term affordability, CLTs also encourage active citizenship by giving local people collective control of decisions in relation to land and assets (Community Land Trust website). One recent GTANA (forthcoming Richardson et, al., 2010) in which TEIP members participated found considerable interest in the concept of CLTs, from localized New Traveller populations who considered themselves well equipped to administer such a scheme and familiar with notions of cooperatively owned assets. If CLTs become more widely developed the growth of such collectively owned land is likely to be another factor which will propel further formalisation of the 'Traveller Economy' through facilitating the preference for home ownership with access to workspace whilst overcoming the obstacles which the TEIP noted were hindering Gypsies and Travellers from securing credit for home ownership.

Given the number of sites that need to be built it is surprising that to date so few Gypsy and Traveller social entrepreneurs and community groups have looked at the economic and social opportunities of site development (see further Chapter 11). However, with the recent increase in community members who have undertaken professional training in accommodation issues such as the BTEC in site management (see Chapter 9) and the willingness of social enterprise organisations to develop training and share expertise within this area (see further Chapter 11) a growing potential exists for this field of community-managed and delivered enterprise. Thus the TEIP recommends that the Homes and Communities Agency needs to develop more targeted initiatives through, for example, a toolkit which provides ongoing advice and support to accelerate this process and specialist training. Similarly, reputable financial lenders (including credit unions which could be supported by successful Gypsy, Traveller and Showmen business people) need to be encouraged by Government agencies to recognise the potential economic power of the communities and to consider supporting Gypsies, Travellers and Showmen (who are also in need of additional accommodation provision, see further Greenfields et. al., 2007) in accessing funding to develop sites.

### Education

Within this report we have demonstrated that access to education and skills are (inevitably) a major contributor to economic success both in mainstream economic practices and within traditional occupations. We commend the Coalition Government's pledge to create a pupil premium where schools will receive extra payments for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, money which can then be used at the school's discretion (Cabinet Office, 2010). In theory such monies can be used to 'buy in' extra services from Traveller Education Services, employ teaching assistants and devise targeted and tailored strategies to increase educational inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers, however at the time of writing details of this proposal remain unclear. We do however have some significant reservations over the impact of the deficit reduction measures announced in October 2010, which will have a significant impact on the funding of local government. Concerns have been raised that such income reduction measures will act to the detriment of

Traveller Education Services and may accelerate the reported trend of redundancies and a failure to fill vacancies (Ryder and Cemlyn, 2010). The emphasis on mainstreaming of educational provision rather than delivering Traveller-specific services may also impact negatively on marginalised community members' ability to enter into and be supported within education, in the light of the findings detailed in Chapter 9

As part of the 'Big Society' agenda the Government is actively encouraging communities play a far greater role in service delivery and design and the TEIP therefore suggests that where GRT communities can engage to influence school policies and curricula matters an opportunity exists to help shape an educational system which meets their needs (for example in schools with high numbers of GRT pupils). The TEIP has found clear evidence amongst the interview sample of growing and positive attitudes towards mainstream education and a willingness to work in that system, for example as classroom assistants etc., however, until a critical mass of 'educated' GRTs is reached, it is difficult to forecast whether this will lead to greater involvement in education services and take-up of 'personalised services' or if the above noted. Fragmentation of Traveller Education Services, limited number of community groups in some localities and general lack of community/political engagement by many community members will lead to the erosion of educational gains made in recent decades.

Whilst plans to accelerate the creation of Academy Schools for top-performing state schools (as defined by the Ofsted inspectorate) may offer significant opportunities for parents to influence the direction of educational provision, this will simultaneously weaken local authority control of schools and thus may lead to a significant reduction in local authority strategic interventions with Gypsies and Travellers. Evidence exists which indicates that, where Academy Schools are in place an emphasis on high level academic achievement and low toleration of non-conforming behaviour has led to a rate of exclusion which is already much higher than found in local authority controlled schools (Ryder and Cemlyn, 2010). The Government's pledge to limit the right to challenge school exclusion may potentially (given the high rate of exclusions already experienced by Gypsy and Traveller pupils~) lead to more conflict with

and disengagement from education for some young people and their families. The TEIP found that poor home school relations and bullying have been major factors in contributing to the educational exclusion of those Gypsies and Travellers who failed in the educational system. Thus the TEIP has some anxiety about the possible impact of these educational reforms. Accordingly, in the design and delivery of these emerging educational policies it is hoped that the Government will be sympathetic to and evaluate the concerns expressed by TEIP and the recently announced GRT Education Stakeholder Group (Hansard, Lords, 27/7/10) which is charged with "fostering effective communication channels with "grassroots" members of the communities to bring about greater awareness of DfE policies and their objectives, encourage the support and help of parents/carers for their children's education; and work to strengthen confidence among their communities" (Hansard, Lords, written answers 1/11/10).

A further major reform that is likely to have important implications for GRT young people, is the Education and Skills Act (2008) which will increase the education leaving age to eighteen, and ensure that all adolescents are engaged in academic, educational training or vocational apprenticeships. This programme will be obligatory and non-compliance could lead to prosecution. At the time of its introduction some Gypsy and Traveller groups expressed disquiet arguing that this reform could cause further conflict between community members and statutory authorities as representing an approach which is in conflict with traditional Gypsy and Traveller adolescent socialisation practices that emphasise in-family learning, training and employment experiences and or practice early parenthood (TLRP 2008).

Given the high number of participants whom TEIP found had re-entered further education (approximately one third of the sample albeit this group are not necessarily 'typical' of the wider population), opportunities for post school learning and training may be welcome by many Gypsies and Travellers, particularly if these can be developed within a personalisation agenda which emphasises employment related skills alongside academic attainment. Key ingredients for success throughout the educational sector comprise the quality of the interface between Gypsies and Travellers (a role which it is hoped will be advised upon and steered by the GRT

Education Stakeholders group discussed above) and education providers offering courses that offer flexibility and community-valued skills.

It is in this space of engagement that the Connexions service will have an important role to play and we commend the innovative good practice projects delivered by the service which we have outlined in Chapter 10. However, as has been indicated by a number of interviewees, the quality of Connexions services is variable and there is some evidence that a number of younger Gypsies and Travellers are not benefitting from contact with this agency. It is, therefore, important for Connexions services and the Youth Sector Development Fund, to work together to develop good links with, and understanding of, Gypsies and Travellers. We recommend that close engagement with Traveller Education Services should be established as a matter of routine good practice, as the TES will be able to provide an important supporting role to Connexions, which draws upon their established expertise and network of local contacts. The TEIP would caution that where flexibility of provision and the use of personalized services does not take place, or liaison with GRT community groups and the TES is poor, a significant danger exists that offers of training and courses perceived of as 'irrelevant' will be rejected, deepening a culture of educational resistance, reversing the growing and positive trend towards take-up post 16 education, and increasing the risk of prosecution for parents who fail to ensure that their youth remain within the education system.

We have noted in Chapter 9 that new and emerging opportunities and platforms for the arts have been created by the former DCSF sponsored establishment of Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month. In the light of the tremendous scope this initiative offers, not only to challenge racism but also to provide new economic outlets for talented artists within the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities the TEIP commend this programme and would urge that initiative continues to receive central Government support and funding. Amongst other minority ethnic communities within the UK arts and culture have become a multi-million pound industry and the same economic, cultural and socially transformative opportunities could emerge from within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. At the time of writing, in the light of the fiscal review it is unclear whether the new Department

for Education will be able to continue to provide the same levels of financial support as heretofore.

### **Welfare and Employment**

The TEIP interviewees have provided evidence that welfare reforms and an emphasis on encouraging people into work have pushed a number of low-skilled Gypsies and Travellers into low paid, unskilled positions which provided limited opportunities for economic and training development. For some women in particular, cultural barriers and expectations (e.g. on remaining at home with children or caring for older relatives, or not working outside of the home/community setting) have led to family conflict and cultural dislocation. The TEIP has noted the low level of support provided by Jobcentre Plus to many Gypsy and Traveller jobseekers, exacerbated in the main by a lack of understanding of culture and ethnicity. Given that the educational and training opportunities and guidance available from advisers in New Deal and Jobcentre Plus agencies has the scope to assist in increasing economic inclusion we are significantly concerned about the limitations of many 'advisors' (and indeed more senior DWP officials') knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles and culture and how this may impact on availability for work. TEIP believes that training and cultural awareness materials should be devised in partnership with GRT community groups and that these should be delivered by qualified Gypsy and Traveller cultural advisors (see under Chapter 10) to New Deal and Jobcentre staff. Such training could encompass cultural awareness training, the Traveller Economy, social networks and traditional and changing gender roles as well as the provision of advice on preferred training and education methods.

DWP research has reported that outreach provision, particularly where provided by someone from the same community, is often successful in reaching groups who are not making use of services, or who are failing to benefit fully from the range of available training and employment opportunities (Hudson et al, 2006). Hence, it is important that Jobcentres act upon the proposal made by the former Government in response to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (fourth periodic report on the UK) that Jobcentre advisors 'forge strong links' with

Gypsy and Traveller community groups. To date the TEIP has found no evidence of these recommendations having been acted on in a systematic manner. Limited information exists on barriers to engagement with DWP services as no research has been conducted on Gypsy and Traveller experiences of accessing Jobcentre support, despite the focus on 'customer experience' which has explored the use of services by members of larger minority ethnic groups (Hudson et al, 2006).

We would therefore strongly recommend that not only are Gypsies and Travellers routinely included as ethnic categories in DWP monitoring of service use/experience (in line with other minority ethnic groups) but that the DWP and Jobcentre Plus devise a more detailed evidence base pertaining to the specific needs of GRT communities and existing community links, through re-configuring the Ethnic Minority Outreach Services and the Ethnic Minority Flexible Fund. The Ethnic Minority Flexible Fund, was a successful pilot project (now discontinued) used by District Managers to support ethnic minorities into accessing and entering into employment, particularly in deprived localities. The programme was predicated on recognising that action on ethnic minority economic exclusion and employment needed to be sensitive to local needs and localities and required a degree of flexibility in ensuring race equality and parity of access. The DWP evaluation report on the programme reported that 'The underlying ethos is that one size does not fit all. District Managers are able to draw on the fund within deliberately broad parameters as befits enhancing local provision' (Crawford et al, 2008). The TEIP would argue that this fund should be revived in some form, and funds made available to undertake further consultation with and research into localised employment and training needs of Gypsies and Travellers in areas with a large GRT population. Follow-up outreach work to communities and staff cultural awareness training could then be undertaken in partnership with local or national Gypsy and Traveller organisations.

Findings from the TEIP study has led the team to question how effective individualised and waged labour directed employment initiatives are when aimed at unemployed Gypsies and Travellers who have often experienced educational exclusion and may have poor literacy skills. We suggest that such community groups (in the light of strong cultural



preferences for bonded capital, family-oriented employment activities) may benefit from more collective and community orientated initiatives that utilise the pre-existing social and cultural capital of the community. This approach may be particularly effective in localised spaces of acute economic exclusion where Gypsies and Travellers living on local authority sites or housing estates are experiencing high levels of unemployment and the Traveller Economy is in crisis (Greenfields and Smith, 2009).

The TEIP believes social enterprise agencies and cooperatively owned organizations (perhaps funded through credit unions) hold significant potential to generate employment and services for Gypsies and Travellers in a number of important social and economic fields. These activities can be facilitated, supported and strengthened by exploiting a preference for bonding social capital. Thus, in relation to Gypsies and Travellers working in the 'Traveller economy' rather than trying to increase employment rates through conventional employment generation schemes, which tend to be targeted at waged labour, we argue that it may be more effective to explore measures which can revive the 'Traveller Economy' through utilising the skills and assets contained within close networks which exist on sites. Such assets include reciprocity, mutuality and the cohesive properties of social capital, which it has been argued are central to any strategies for neighbourhood renewal (CLG, 2006; CONSCISE, 2003; Forrest and Kearns, 2001). Accordingly, economic revival initiatives could be based around the concept of engagement with 'social firms' (social enterprises designed to work with people who are disadvantaged in the labour market). The development of such social firms holds the potential to deliver work opportunities as well as offering training and skills development to marginalised Gypsies and Travellers. Such social business initiatives have the supreme benefit of operating in a culturally appropriate manner which is preferred by and accessible to the 'hardest to reach' Gypsy and Traveller men viz: working with fellow community members and (especially in the case of cooperatives) in a manner which provides participants with a degree of control and self-determination which are some of the most prized features of the Traveller Economy. To date such newly emerging Gypsy/Traveller social enterprises are largely limited to the provision of accommodation and third sector services. As we have demonstrated, in common

with other ethnic minorities (Cabinet Office, 2003, 24), Gypsies and Travellers, have a high incidence of self-employment, but unlike other BME communities, to date, Gypsy and Traveller social enterprise and cooperative structures have made limited and negligible headway. In their failure to develop proportionate social enterprises and cooperative ventures Gypsies and Travellers are in danger of falling behind in business initiatives that hold the potential to support community members in overcoming the hurdles posed by increasing levels of regulation and bureaucracy. Accordingly we would recommend that greater central, local and institutional underpinning is required to support and promote GRT led social enterprise initiatives as well as assisting in developing the infrastructure and number of local community groups to help deliver such projects through utilising the mechanisms of local enterprise boards, equality impact assessment and multi-agency forums within local areas.

### ***A National Plan for Gypsies Roma and Travellers***

In exploring the multi-factorial domains of exclusion which have had to be overcome by successful GRT communities' members, the TEIP has been repeatedly struck by the complexities facing individuals (and groups) who have often been lacking in experience, training, capacity and educational/cultural knowledge when seeking to develop new economic opportunities. One way of facilitating GRT knowledge of support which is available, and simultaneously raising the awareness of service providers as to the needs of GRT community members, would be through the adoption of an explicit national action plan which has an emphasis on these communities' experiences and economic/social situation.

Unlike some other countries (e.g. Ireland) Britain lacks a coherent Gypsy Roma Traveller national plan which sets out how specific and general measures and instruments can facilitate the social inclusion of members of these communities. Such a plan, if adopted, would enable service providers, users and campaigners to effectively assess and apply social policy to meet the needs of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. The TEIP proposes that such a plan could be framed by the civil servants and GRT representatives/experts who are already involved in a number of existing

central government department forums and initiatives. The TEIP is greatly encouraged by the fact the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is consulting on current draft recommendations issued to European Governments (including the UK) recommending that Governments employ, under a national plan, a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to issues concerning Roma [a term which subsumes in this context Gypsy and Traveller groups], involving their representatives in the conception, framing, implementation and evaluation of the policies that concern them (ECRI, 2010). The ECRI has made a series of further proposals, of particular relevance to Economic inclusion strategies, placing an emphasis on employment, (particularly to recruitment) and vocational training and including measures to stamp out employment discrimination, all issues which have featured prominently within this report. The ECRI also calls for steps to be taken to monitor the employment situation of these minorities by conducting research into such questions as the causes and level of unemployment, and through gathering related statistical data (ECRI, 2010).

These points relate closely to the findings and recommendation made within the TEIP report. We strongly recommend that these proposals are formally adopted by the British Government (and indeed other European administrations) and that such 'national plans' become key drivers for devising measures to raise the economic and social inclusion of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers across Europe.

### Key Questions

- \* Should 'personalised services', targeted measures and positive action be more widely adopted in the UK for Gypsies and Travellers?
- \* Can these measures support economic inclusion?
- \* Where these measures have been implemented what have been the outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers?

### Personalisation

The debate on delivery of social inclusion policies has often been constructed in terms of mainstream versus specialist service provision. The developing concept of 'personalisation'

may however resolve these divisions and offer a positive way forward particularly at the community-base level. Throughout the report the TEIP has highlighted the benefits of support measures that are flexible and targeted at specific Gypsy and Traveller communities' needs and we therefore suggest that personalisation as a mechanism for engaging with the 'Big Society' agenda holds clear potential as a way of supporting community groups into becoming service providers, and in so creating new employment opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers.

We are not however, unaware of the hurdles to be overcome if this process is to be successfully undertaken. In comparison to the majority of other ethnic minorities, the Gypsy and Traveller third sector remains underdeveloped (see Chapter 11), especially in terms of the geographical spread of localised community groups which are not reflective of the distribution of RGT populations. Despite considerable progress having been made in capacity building in recent years, the development of community capacity is still at a relatively early stage and there remains large areas of the country with high number of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers and little community organisation and/or representation. We suggest that this lack of community organisation may therefore hinder the potential for the effective 'personalisation' of services, the creation of local partnerships in service provision and concurrent employment of community members. However, an alternative, and one which has the significant benefit of moving GRT community members out of the 'glass box' (See Chapter 6) and enhancing bridging capital is that statutory service providers should, as a product of equality impact assessments, and with the intent of developing enhanced community cohesion, seek to employ Gypsies and Travellers in a proportion similar to their presence in the local population. Whilst the percentages of employed GRT community members in mainstream services (at least those who self-identify as such) is significantly lower and disproportionate to their numbers, a number of statutory sector organisations have successfully taken this step, primarily employing community members in mediation and outreach roles (see further Chapter 11).

It should also be borne in mind that successful personalisation of services is dependent upon effective negotiation between clients

and service providers. The lack of GRT groups in many areas (and indeed limited capacity in locations where they exist) coupled with low confidence and skills on the part of many individual Gypsies and Travellers and a lack of awareness of these groups' needs by service staff means that a risk exists that GRT communities miss out on the potential opportunities offered by the personalisation agenda. As we have noted elsewhere, the high incidence of racism experienced by Gypsies and Travellers is also likely to impact on take-up of services and increase caution in interacting with external agencies.

Concerns have been raised by some third sector groups that engagement with the personalisation agenda could increase 'back office' costs and demands on community groups if they are contracted to deliver tailored services and projects, particularly where these are across a geographically large rural area. However, as we have identified, partnerships between established NGOs and smaller community groups (as utilised in the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group- and Lincolnshire Gypsy Liaison Group case study discussed in Chapter 11) may offer solutions to these obstacles (Dickinson and Glasby, 2010). A further risk to the success of delivering personalised services, is that organisations emerge with the requisite formal structures to enable them to win contracts and services but in effect 'colonise' these niche markets giving little say to users and client communities and instead being driven by opportunistic organisational development. We would therefore propose that localised tailored delivery undertaken by smaller local groups in partnership with larger NGOs (see Chapter 11) offer the most effective mode of delivery. The 'litmus test' for establishing successfully personalised and inclusive funded projects should, we recommend, be local capacity building potential and active involvement in design, delivery and coordination by local Gypsies and Travellers, a core issue with which many successful community groups we examined continued to engage.

One core aspect of the personalisation agenda which may prove beneficial to emerging community groups and social enterprises is the ability to seek the transfer of assets and service delivery mechanisms to community led groups (CLG, 2006 and 2007; Cabinet Office 2008). This process will feature in Local Area Agreements and compacts, (concordats for effective partnership working between the third sector

and central government) which underpin and facilitate the achievement of shared objectives (CLG, 2006) as well as being a core element of the Big Society debate. Thus community groups have the potential to gain ownership of buildings and from these emerging social action centres and begin to develop a range of income generating activities. We suggest therefore that where capacity and skills exist, valuable opportunities could arise for existing and emerging Gypsy and Traveller community groups to develop 'community hubs' (perhaps on housing estates with a large GRT population) which enable them to retain strong and valuable grassroots links to their client groups whilst generating employment opportunities through the delivery of social enterprise services such as welfare support, training and the management of community assets (CLG, 2007).

We note too, that Central government departments may have a role to play in the development of GRT led local initiatives as all of the 'good practice' service providers and community groups featured in this report were either involved in, or made reference to, targeted and innovative projects which originated from Departments such as Communities and Local Government, the former Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Office of the Third Sector. In contrast, to date the Department for Work and Pensions has not been proactive in targeting measures to increase Gypsy and Traveller take up of mainstream services such as Business Link support or training packages and we would hope that the DWP will take note of the opportunities and proposals we have outlined within this report to engage further with GRT with the intention of actively supporting these communities' economic inclusion.

### *The Big Society*

Throughout this report we have made significant reference to the emerging 'Big Society' agenda. The Government has emphasised its support for public participation and governance policies through the 'Big Society' agenda and affirmation of support for personalisation (Cabinet Office, 2010).

Despite the considerable opportunities which we have identified throughout this report some considerable threats to the success of the model exist, in particular, the requirement

for greater engagement between GRT groups and mainstream services and partnerships. Our analysis of good practice has shown that where bridging capital and shared inter-cultural knowledge exists community led projects can be highly successful in engaging with mainstream services and compacts. However the successful groups we analysed have in recent years been , relatively securely funded and supported by experienced workers engaged in initiatives with high levels of community 'buy in'. In a time of recession where charitable funders have reduced donations and central and local government have had to make cutbacks the rollback of support potentially makes diversification into new personalised services a risky venture for newer and perhaps less confident organisations.

### **Targeting Exclusion whilst Avoiding Segregation**

Whilst the TEIP strongly endorses the provision of 'targeted' measures we would urge that great care needs to be taken so that such provision does not become segregated, which in effect limits the impact of the emerging levels of bridging capital which we have identified as a key aspect of social and economic inclusion. We are also aware that segregated provision may at times equate to substandard services, as evidenced by interviewees' narratives of engagement with specialist educational facilities (see Chapter 9) where separate provision, intended to provide short term focused support had drifted into ghettoisation. However, carefully monitored and evaluated targeted flexible services (e.g. specific skills training) hold the potential to significantly strengthen mainstream provision and enhance its relevance for Gypsies and Travellers. Murphy (2001) notes that targeted measures for Travellers are not always incompatible with mainstreaming services and recommends that close relationship should exist between mainstream and targeted support so that knowledge arising from, for example, a local pilot project is then fed back into the daily operations of the State and becomes part of the activities of other key service providers so that "their methods and approaches change and the pilot becomes part of established services or turns those services into new directions " (Murphy, 2001, 45).

### **Positive Action**

Throughout this report we have made considerable reference to positive action which appears to be widespread in relation to recruitment of staff to community engagement projects. Where community knowledge, experience and trust is required, employment of GRT staff members is widely identified as being of great value in meeting the objectives of organisations. Positive action was most commonly enacted through the use of targeted recruitment which placed an important emphasis on experience and community knowledge within selection procedures, and then provided training and support to upskill staff in areas where experience or specific knowledge was found to be lacking. In the light of the positive outcomes examined within this report the TEIP believes there is scope for greater exchange of good practice knowledge and the application of 'positive action' behaviours amongst community groups and service providers. To this end we would recommend that stake holders actively seek to disseminate knowledge of their employment practices and good practice recommendations through the mechanisms of the Irish Traveller Movement hosted web-based economic inclusion knowledge exchange system referred to at the beginning of Part 4 of this report. It is hoped that this initiative might lead to even greater cooperative work between the lead agencies in GRT capacity building.

### **Key Questions**

- \* To what degree have Gypsies and Travellers been involved in designing and coordinating projects to support economic inclusion
- \* What input have GRT communities had into designing governance structures within public and private arenas?

### **Empowerment within the Traveller Economy and Third Sector**

Much of this report consists of exploring the ways in which GRT communities can be empowered to become actively involved in devising solutions to economic and social exclusion. Such engagement at an individual and group level is an important factor in reversing the marginalisation of Gypsies and Travellers. At an individual level it ensures that



community members possess the requisite life and business skills to adapt and prosper, and within organisations and projects the inclusion of the authentic voice of community members ensures that initiatives are relevant and hence effective. An additional and critically important factor is that listening to GRT community members as a group (a community of interest) and engaging in intercultural dialogue and partnership working with them, empowers the excluded as a collective, allowing their views to be heard in debates over the direction and design of measures to remedy economic and social exclusion.

Empowerment can take a number of forms, including the ability to have the confidence to access training and undertake activities in a way which creates greater autonomy and self-reliance. The TEIP found clear evidence of Gypsy and Traveller businesses expanding and employing staff and working competitively in the formal economy. In some cases expertise in the form of secretarial or management/accountancy support has been 'hired in' to companies but there was also increasing evidence of community members themselves developing skills to enable them to manage large business projects or encouraging (family female family members) wives and daughters to access training which permitted them to deal with 'the paperwork' rather than bringing in expertise from outside of the community. In this way Gypsy and Traveller enterprises and small businesses will in time begin to reflect the patterns commonly found amongst many other minority ethnic businesses which often demonstrate a preference for employing relatives, peers and other community members.

In addition to the growth of individual enterprise, the TEIP found that Gypsy and Traveller involvement in the governance and management of community projects was increasing dramatically. In the past, a number of community groups had reported that they found the bureaucracy and technical nature of governance structures to be frustrating, particularly for community members with low levels of formal education. Thus a model emerged where Gypsies and Travellers were more prominent in management positions in community groups which they had been active in establishing, whilst in community projects initiated by non-community members, they were more likely to be employed as outreach staff, case workers and sessional workers. Both

statutory and community organisations are clear that the employment of Gypsies and Travellers in both long term and short term initiatives as well as acting as volunteers, greatly enhances the direction and management of projects as decisions are be informed by community experience. As we have noted in Chapter Six in 2005 only a small number of Gypsies and Travellers were employed in community projects, by 2010 this has increased exponentially. The TEIP has no doubt as a greater number of GRT community members gain formal qualifications, work experience and develop their skills, their presence in senior and management positions will become ever more prominent.

### Volunteering

TEIP found that, in terms of engagement with volunteering, interviewees reported that other than their activities with faith groups, most volunteering was focused on Gypsy and Traveller community engagement. This should come as no surprise. High levels of community exclusion have been found to be a motivating factor, as interviewees put what spare time and energy they have, into helping their other Gypsies and Travellers in recognition of the depths of exclusion suffered by their communities.

We note too, based upon the findings pertaining to experiences of racism that many GRT community members feel more at ease working within a context where they know and understand processes and those with whom they come into contact. In contrast, wider involvement in community organisations and forums such as local area-based groups or local government was limited. Low civic engagement is a typical feature of those who are highly excluded but also reflects the lack of trust in, and fear of, wider society prompted by the high levels of discrimination and prejudice we have identified within this report.

To varying degrees, GRT community groups we interviewed had concerns about the extent to which they had mobilised grassroots community involvement. However, such involvement was increasing as the value of volunteering was (albeit often slowly) being recognised by larger numbers of (mainly female and often young) community members who were taking the opportunity of volunteering



in a 'safe' culturally acceptable environment to develop their employability skills. The development of new and innovative ways of communicating with the wider GRT community were also being cited as leading to increased interest in, and knowledge of, community development models and ways of engaging in volunteering. In particular Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month and the Travellers' Times were cited as notable dissemination examples which were leading to increased levels of community involvement in a range of activities.

We note too, that where community groups and social enterprise agencies engage with the 'personalised' services agenda, additional opportunities for volunteering or community engagement will occur, particularly if social enterprise groups become more visible as a result of asset transfer and service delivery in local areas. Thus as community groups enhance their grassroots links and relevance to local groups of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers staff expertise will evolve along with the potential to engage greater numbers of community members in volunteering and service delivery as they can see that other GRTs have made the transition from service user to service provider whilst being upskilled in a supportive community context.

### Political Inclusion

As has been reported on behalf of the EHRC (Cemlyn et. al., 2009) Gypsies, Travellers and Roma are politically extremely disengaged and frequently disenfranchised despite (or perhaps because of) the appallingly high levels of exclusion experienced across numerous domains. Without the inclusion of a clear ethnic monitoring categories of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in most civic activities and with the lack of the ability to easily 'track' a GRT related 'ethnic vote' it is impossible to know the true extent of political engagement and voting behaviours amongst these communities. However, persistent anecdotal evidence asserts that very few Gypsies and Travellers (particularly those resident on sites) are registered to vote, and (as is well evidenced) that candidates are more likely to seek to achieve political office through raising objections to Traveller sites in a neighbourhood than to attempt to engage with site residents. Thus the spatial and social exclusion and segregation experienced by GRT population maps across onto civic exclusion.

Without local councillors and indeed MPs identifying that Gypsies and Travellers are as much members of their constituencies as are other BME community members, Gypsies and Travellers report that they all too often experience a sense of political powerlessness arising from the systemic failure for GRT concerns to be taken seriously, other than by a few committed politicians. The Travellers Times (included as an example of a good practice organisation in Chapter 11 in advance of the 2010 general election ran a campaign to encourage Gypsies and Travellers to register to vote, and sought to highlight the importance of political participation in influencing local government agendas (Travellers Times, January 2010) although to date no evidence is available as to the success of this innovative and much needed campaign to encourage political participation

Despite the impression of low voting registration and turn-out amongst the communities, in recent years, Gypsy and Traveller engagement in national decision making processes has grown apace. Not only has CLG established a Gypsy and Traveller Forum, but the DCSF and new Department of Education have also engaged with community stakeholders around educational matters. The Department of Health has successfully worked with a panel of Gypsy and Traveller advisors at both local and national level to deliver Pacesetters programmes which set out to mitigate appalling health inequalities experienced by GRT people (NHS, 2009). Whilst these debates have focused on accommodation, education and health, the involvement of community activists has done much to inform civil servants and ministers of appropriate engagement processes and the needs of the communities. Regrettably though, in the light of the high levels of racism, discrimination and hate-crime victimisation which are anecdotally rarely reported (a belief which is supported by our own findings) we are not aware of any engagement or consultation between the Home Office; Ministry of Justice and GRT community members.

Despite these positive signs of engagement, the TEIP believes that the issue of economic inclusion has to date been neglected by Government agencies and thus would recommend that a joint DWP/DBIS Gypsy and Traveller forum is developed, to monitor and feed into a coherent programme of action

based upon this report.

In aiding the process of policy engagement with economic inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers we suggest that existing mechanisms are also utilised. The DWP 'Customer Insight Team' are charged with acting as customer advocates: challenging service providers and professionals to view initiatives from the perspective of DWP clients. We would propose that this team needs to support and further views which emerge from this report, any specialist consultations which may follow and (should it be initiated) from the proposed Gypsy and Traveller Forum, working to translate community aspirations into concrete actions within the DWP. In addition, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (DBIS) has an Ethnic Minority Business Forum (EMBF) which advises the DBIS on race and equality issues. At present this forum has no Gypsy and Traveller members. Either an economically successful Gypsy or Traveller business person be recruited to this body, or if a DWP Forum is established, a community member should be co-opted to the EMBF to forge links and to act as a conduit of information between GRT communities and the wider business world.

We would urge that should a Gypsy and Traveller forum be developed that it must not just be an unfocussed 'talking shop' but must deliver relevant, efficient outcomes. In particular, we would advise that key priorities for a Gypsy and Traveller economic inclusion forum should include:

- \* Promoting social enterprise and cooperatives, particularly in areas of acute exclusion
- \* Promoting personalised and inclusive services – particularly within Business Support; New Deal and Job Seekers' Plus initiatives and education and training opportunities for adolescents/adults
- \* The promotion of positive action and dissemination of good employment and training practice

### **The Future**

This report has been produced against a backdrop of profound economic change and insecurity across Britain and the world. The situation facing Gypsies and Travellers (particularly those working in traditional

economies or who have few transferable skills) appears relatively bleak. However as identified within this report the community as a whole is flexible, adaptive and ambitious. We have presented a mixed picture in terms of exclusion and success but have also identified a series of proposals and ways forward to achieve greater economic inclusion of GRT communities which takes account of both cultural patterns and preferences and emerging policy agendas.

Following the General Election which produced a hung parliament and the formation of a Coalition Government composed of Conservatives and Liberals the TEIP hopes that cross party consensus can be developed on the issue of Gypsies and Travellers. The TEIP has set out a moral, social and business case for measures to help raise the economic inclusion of this minority. Growth and innovation in the Traveller Economy, social enterprise and movement into new areas of employment will do much to reduce economic exclusion where it does exist, creating positive role models and images and giving the community the confidence to articulate their aspirations in policies and ventures which they have helped to shape.

For this progress to take place however, policy responses will need to be flexible and targeted, a point emphasised throughout this report. In addition, policies which seek to enhance economic inclusion will also need to engage with encouraging and facilitating increased participation in education, training and business support and assisting the development of a greater supply of decent accommodation.

The success of responses to exclusion can be maximised by utilising the strong social bonds of Gypsy and Traveller families and their associated networks and using these existing resources to build new economic ventures as well as to deliver support. However, strong social bonds should not preclude meaningful partnerships with 'outside' agencies and we have explored the ways in which inter-cultural understanding and engagement are leading to the development of bridging capital and skills development which benefit both Gypsies and Travellers and wider society alike whilst enhancing community cohesion.

### ***A Summary of Recommendations from the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project***

Having undertaken the TEIP we are anxious that this report will not simply remain "on the shelf". Accordingly, the next stage of the TEIP is to take the recommendations arising from out of this report forward, with community activists joining in partnership with policy practitioners and academics, to engage in a constructive lobbying strategy.

The TEIP team are hopeful that the Government will be open to the views contained within this report and that policy makers and practitioners will use the evidence we have gathered to engage fully with community activists to debate practice and process and devise a clear course of action which will move Gypsies and Travellers to full economic inclusion.

This report has tried to emphasise that genuine and committed intercultural debate and discussion hold the potential to lead to change and innovation in the fields of Gypsy and Traveller economic and social inclusion. It is critically important that such debate takes place to ensure that the policies, evaluation and monitoring processes which arise are informed, inclusive policies and effective.

In the remaining pages of this report we present a summary of policy and practices recommendations which we would urge are adopted to ensure social justice and inclusion for Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (GRT) living in Britain

### **The Traveller Economy**

- \* Greater targeted support for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers to develop their own businesses e.g through by regional development agencies/ Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- \* Dialogue with the Department for Work and Pensions on how best support and guidance can be targeted towards the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community
- \* Improved outreach by Business Links to Gypsies, Roma and Travellers
- \* Building upon emerging good practice (an existing DVD on 'cold calling') local Trading Standards Offices should develop targeted

information and awareness raising activities for Gypsies Roma and Travellers on restrictions on 'cold calling'

- \* The extension and promotion of 'registered Good Practice tradespeople' schemes operated by Trading Standards Departments to Gypsy and Traveller tradespeople
- \* The promotion and development of social enterprise and cooperative economic structures within the Traveller Economy. The development of intercultural fora and dialogue between Gypsy and Traveller groups with the Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) and Co-operative Diversity Action (CDA) which provides support, resources and guidance for BME communities who are engaged in co-operative enterprise.
- \* The promotion of innovative flexible funding and training schemes which can help Gypsies and Travellers to develop their own businesses. e.g. The Prince's Trust which has an emerging track record in supporting young Travellers with 'start-up' support and business planning advice, as well as offering small 'community cash awards' to start-up community projects.

### **Access to Waged Labour**

- \* Greater exchange of good practice examples and models e.g. 'positive action', community recruitment, encouraging volunteering, employment of sessional staff and employee support amongst projects employing Gypsies, Roma and Travellers . Facilitated by the Irish Traveller Movement Britain's (ITMB) economic inclusion project web-resource
- \* The development of shared training and support packages. by and for community enterprises employing GRT staff and volunteers.
- \* Increased promotion of volunteering amongst unemployed Gypsies and Travellers. Implementation of flexible welfare schemes so that unemployed GRT are not penalized within the Benefits system whilst acquiring transferable skills.
- \* Targeted initiatives to reduce the occurrence of informal work practices/unemployment and to encourage 'regularisation' of work situations
- \* Raised awareness of, and access to, training opportunities amongst those in low waged/lw

skilled employment. \* The Jobcentre Plus Ethnic Minority Flexible Fund be revived and used to provide targeted outreach for Gypsies Roma and Travellers.

\* Cultural training and awareness raising education/activities for DWP front-line and managerial staff to be delivered in partnership with Gypsy Roma and Traveller community groups

### **Accommodation**

\* There is an urgent need to promote new types of affordable and inclusive credit for home ownership amongst Gypsies and Travellers (e.g. through Community Land Trusts and other co-operative ventures. \* There is a need to provide new (and upgraded) site provision through a targeted approach to delivery of accommodation. Sites to comprise

of a mixture of tenures (e.g. rented; shared ownership; owner-occupied, etc.) with clear deadlines set for addressing the national shortage of sites. \* Where 'working space' is not provided or is not considered suitable on residential sites, assistance should be provided to help trades-people identify well-located adjacent work zones. Co-operative or social enterprise owned socially managed working units which are affordable in response to fluctuating incomes and flexible use of the space may potentially offer a solution to shortage of 'Traveller economy' working space.

\* Attempts to revive the Traveller Economy through cooperative/social employment ventures should be undertaken in localised spaces of acute economic exclusion. \* There is a need to raise awareness amongst Gypsies and Travellers of the economic and social inclusion opportunities of entering into site management/ownership and construction programmes. The Homes and Communities Agency to design a targeted toolkit to achieve this aim with on-going advice and support from Gypsy and Traveller community groups.

### **Education**

\* Greater flexibility in educational provision and opportunity for interactive and practical learning experiences within the school curriculum

\* Targeted measures can increase educational inclusion but care needs to be taken to avoid segregation and separation of GRT pupils from 'mainstream' society'

\* There is a need for increased numbers of trained Connexions staff with a specific Gypsy Roma Traveller remit

\* Traveller Education Services have an important role in promoting educational inclusion. The erosion of such provision is proving counterproductive to this goal.

\* Community role models who have engaged with education (including mature students or professionals who left school early and returned to education) should work at a national and local level to raise aspirations and confidence amongst GRT community members.

\* A national (virtual) support network should be established for Gypsies and Travellers in higher education. 'Real-Life networks should be supported at geographical locations where a critical mass of GRT students exists.

\* The Youth Sector Development Fund should promote targeted and flexible post 16 learning experiences, which will make retaining young Gypsies and Travellers within the education leaving age more practical and viable option.

\* TES/Connexions and Gypsy and Traveller community groups should work in partnership to identify and establish 'appropriate' work experience and volunteering options (and internships within GRT social enterprises) for young people.

### **Social Capital and Community Relations**

\* The Government should fund and support a public awareness campaign to draw the public's attention to the range of important community roles performed by Gypsies, Roma and Travellers and to challenge negative stereotypes.

\* The Government and other bodies should continue to give support to Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month which is effective in increasing community pride in GRT ethnicity and in developing bridging capital and increased understanding of GRT cultures and achievements amongst 'mainstream' society.

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## **Appendix A**

### ***A Note of Caution in relation to Administrative Data Sources***

Where appropriate through the TEIP report we make reference to national and local datasets. These include the biannual count of caravans undertaken on behalf of the CLG, PLASC data (the school annual census) and GTANA Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and other Needs Assessments. The note below details the caution required when utilising such data and reports on some of the inadequacies of these existing datasets.

It is impossible to frame a clear demographic snapshot of Gypsies and Travellers which captures all communities residing in various types of accommodation. As stated throughout the report there is a significant mismatch between recognition of Roma/Gypsy/Irish Traveller and Scottish Gypsy-Travellers as ethnic groups (New Travellers broadly fall within the definition of occupational Travellers and are thus not minority ethnic groups) and the categories commonly found in ethnic monitoring forms.

There is a slow but increasing tendency to include G/R/T as categories within monitoring forms (for example for Supporting People and in some health service reporting returns), but this is not yet general nor compulsory. There is considerable resistance amongst many Gypsies and Travellers to self-identifying as members of their communities as a result of experiences of racism, and fear that this will increase should they voluntarily supply information on their ethnic origins.

Once Gypsies and Travellers are included as a Census category in the forthcoming 2011 Census, more effective data on the size of the population may become available although again issues of low self-identification will exist. Cemlyn et. al., (2009) detail the numerous categories where no datasets exist detailing the presence of Gypsies and Travellers despite the value of identifying anecdotally severe disproportionality (e.g. in the criminal justice system; suffering from particular health conditions; presence in low paid work as identified through workforce surveys, or who are unemployed). As has been discussed within the report the DWP do not monitor take-up of services or access to benefits by Gypsies and Travellers, wrongly identifying members of these communities as adopting a 'lifestyle' rather than being (in many cases) members of ethnic groups.

The confusion of many agencies is compounded by the fact that not all Gypsies and Travellers are members of ethnic groups (see above) and that different datasets are designed to meet the needs of different departments or for distinct purposes (e.g. planning purposes). Thus, whilst datasets are kept on the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans (the CLG bi-annual caravan count which is undertaken as a one-day 'snapshot' of all such caravans on authorised and unauthorised sites/developments on January and July and which includes New Traveller vehicles), considerable controversy exists as to the accuracy of the count (Cemlyn, et. al., 2009).

There have been persistent accusations of undercounting of caravans to minimize (accidentally or deliberately) the size of populations and resultant expectations that local authorities will act to address the shortfall in local site provision. Moreover, in highly urbanised areas the majority of the Gypsy and Traveller population are

likely to reside in housing and are thus 'invisible' (Drakakis-Smith and Mason, 2002).

Ivatts, commenting on the imperfections of the biannual count and its failure to provide a more detailed profile of the inhabitants of caravans noted:

"The established practice since the early 1970s of the ODPM (formerly the Department of the Environment) only counting caravans at a visual distance is perhaps reflective of government being more concerned about the politics of unauthorised camping than in identifying the needs of the people within these very marginalised communities" (Ivatts, 2005).

In contrast to concerns to regularly recorded data on 'caravans' no statistics are automatically kept



on the number of 'ethnic' (or other) Gypsies and Travellers who have moved from such traditional accommodation into registered social landlord housing, thus essentially 'losing' such Gypsies and Travellers within data on mainstream White British occupants.

An annual census is taken in schools (PLASC) which records attainment and attendance of all pupils as well as including ethnic monitoring and self-ascription categories that incorporate options for Roma/Gypsy and Travellers of Irish Heritage. Ivatts (2005) estimates that only around 12% to 14% of pupils/parents are self-ascribing to GRT categories. Many parents report (see further Cemlyn et. al., 2009) their reluctance to self-identify as Gypsies and Travellers as selecting this option is perceived of as exacerbating the risk of experiencing high levels of racism such as those identified within this report. Hence PLASC statistics, whilst a useful tool for calculating percentages of GRT pupils in certain localities are a significant undercount of the real number of such children.

Problematically then the two key datasets which exist, only identify young people below school leaving age (GRT is not routinely included as a category in college/university monitoring forms) and thus excludes older people, and exclude many families not resident in 'traditional' accommodation.

Emerging Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and other Needs Assessments (GTANA) data (collected in all local authorities with accommodation duties under the requirements of the 2004 Housing Act) reveals a richer picture, since, as well as assessing accommodation needs many of these surveys contain useful information on employment and training needs. However, many GTANAs have been criticized for the extremely variable quality of data collected. Additionally not all such surveys include a focus on employment or income related data. Whilst GTANAs include a sample of housed Gypsies and Travellers (including New Travellers) they exclude Roma.

Unlike some other data sources, GTANAs do however include a wide age range within their target groups and the better reports will include information on employment and educational attainment and aspiration (see further Appendix B). However, they inevitably only provide data on a sample of local Gypsy and Traveller residents/people traveling through the area which can merely be regarded as indicative of emerging trends within a specific locality. To date no attempt has been made to collate such localised data into a national profile. Thus, no definitive data set exists which reveals clear employment trends amongst the communities.

In an attempt to identify where and how sources of information pertaining to the education and employment of Gypsies and Travellers can most effectively be accessed, the Traveller Economic Inclusion Project (TEIP) has summarised information on the contents of thirty four GTANAs in Appendix B.

### ***Assessing Integration in the light of paucity of data***

The Institute for Labour at the University of Bonn has devised a framework to aid in assessing the level of integration that Roma enjoy in Central/Eastern European societies. This tool is designed to act as a way of judging the effectiveness of projects delivered within the EU Decade for Roma Inclusion (cross national initiative to raise economic and social inclusion).

The Bonn research team devised a criteria for analysing social inclusion which enables the categorisation of data sources. The 'first best option' assumes that all the information required to assess Roma integration is available. The 'second best option' proposes the use of national data sets such as censuses, labour surveys and data on education which contain relevant ethnic categorisations. The 'third best option' consists of any dataset that may provide indicators of integration (IZA Research Report, No 21, 2009).

If this mechanism is applied to the UK then the researcher would only have partial use of data termed 'second best', re PLASC data and caravan count data. Most of the evidence which is available is more localised e.g. GTANA reports which would probably be classed as 'third best'

as large sample surveys are of little use in detecting small minorities, especially when they are hesitant to self identify as in the case of Gypsies and Travellers.

The UK is not unique in the paucity of accurate and detailed data on Gypsies Roma and Travellers. On March 9th, 2009 the European Union EPSCO (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs) Council and the Commission jointly adopted the 2009 Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion which concluded that in most countries a comprehensive policy framework for engaging with these minorities is still lacking, due in part to the non-availability of data and an insufficient knowledge-base (EU, 2009).

Comments on data quality and collection in the UK may therefore form part of a critique of UK policy responses towards Gypsies and Travellers.

Flaws in existing data (as outlined above) thus present problems for trying to identify national traits in the Gypsy and Traveller population. Consequently, this makes it difficult to devise a truly representative sample of interviewees or match and compare interview findings with national traits and trends in the Gypsy and Traveller population. Hence, two researchers with experience of Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments have stated "Accurately establishing a 'base population' of Gypsy-Travellers is possibly one of the most difficult things to achieve in a research project" (Brown and Scullion, 2009), a view with which we can only concur.

## Appendix B

### *A summary of GTANA data relating to employment and economic inclusion*

The 34 GTANAs summarised below contain a number of references to employment and economic issues as these are factors which clearly impact on accommodation aspirations and affordability.

Guidance issued by Communities and Local Government suggests that GTANA questionnaires should explore a number of factors that have economic significance. For example, affordability, access to and take-up of housing benefits; site restrictions which impact on employment, employment aspirations for children and whether there are work and storage space on sites (CLG, 2007, 28 – 31).

Despite these recommendations, the light-touch included in the guidance in reference to employment and economic issues combined with the flexibility and non-prescriptive nature of the guidance has led to great variation in the quality and type of information on this subject. Another factor which has contributed to sometimes limited concentration on these areas has been clearly identified community apprehension pertaining to questions of this nature which are often regarded with suspicion (see further Chapter One and Two for a more in-depth discussion). Accordingly, some GTANAs make detailed reference not only to employment types but income levels and the relationship between types of accommodation and work-related needs whilst others pay scant attention to this issue, merely summarising employment activities. Despite these variations only one GTANA of the thirty four summarised below, fails to make any reference to employment issues.

The table below details the number of references within a possible total of 34 studies where reference is made to the topics listed within the GTANA guidance as pertaining to economic inclusion:

**Table B(i) Factors impacting on economic inclusion included in GTANA data**

Employment type	26/34
Affordability of site (rental/purchase)	22/34
Access to and take-up of Housing Benefit	15/34
Employment aspirations for children	7/34
References to work space, storage and employment related nomadism	28/34
Training Aspirations and Experiences	18/34
Discrimination – not explicitly in CLG guidance	18/34
Income – not explicitly included in CLG guidance	11/34
Benefits – not explicitly included in CLG guidance	13/34

As can be seen in Table B(i) the most commonly explored topics relate directly to site design and provision with broader economic and social inclusion domains being less commonly explored.

**Table B(ii) Elements of GTANAs conforming to CLG guidance on domains relevant to economic inclusion**

GTANA (Locality)	Employment	Affordability	Housing Benefit	Employment/ Aspirations for Children	Reference to Work/Storage Space/ Work Related Travel	Training	Other references not metioned in CLG guidance
Bassetlaw							
Bedfordshire & Luton							
Birmingham, Coventry & Solihull							
Broadland within Norfolk							
Cambridge							
Cheshire							
Cumbria							
Derbyshire							
Devon							
Dorset							
East Kent							

<b>GTANA (Locality)</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Affordability</b>	<b>Housing Benefit</b>	<b>Employment/ Aspirations for Children</b>	<b>Reference to Work/Storage Space/ Work Related Travel</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Other references not metioned in CLG guidance</b>
<b>Essex</b>							
<b>Gloucester</b>							
<b>Hertfordshire (Half)</b>							
<b>Hampshire &amp; The Isle of Wight</b>							
<b>Lancashire</b>							
<b>Leicestershire &amp; Rutland</b>							
<b>London</b>							
<b>Milton Keynes</b>							
<b>North East</b>							
<b>North Norfolk</b>							
<b>North Surrey</b>							



<b>GTANA (Locality)</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Affordability</b>	<b>Housing Benefit</b>	<b>Employment/ Aspirations for Children</b>	<b>Reference to Work/Storage Space/ Work Related Travel</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Other references not metioned in CLG guidance</b>
<b>Somerset</b>							
<b>South Holland</b>							
<b>South Kesteven</b>							
<b>South West Hertfordshire</b>							
<b>South Yorkshire</b>							
<b>Staffordshire/ Newcastle Under Lyme/ Stoke</b>							
<b>Suffolk</b>							
<b>Thames Valley</b>							
<b>West Sussex</b>							
<b>West Kent</b>							
<b>West Surrey</b>							
<b>Wiltshire</b>							

## **Appendix C**

### **The Survey Questionnaire**

#### **Traveller Economic Inclusion Questionnaire/Topic Guide**

##### **1/**

- \* Age
- \* Place of birth
- \* Present location (region) (rural/urban)
- \* Gender \* Children (age/Do they live with you?)
- \* What GRT group do you classify yourself as (Gypsy/Roma/Welsh/Scottish/Irish Traveller/mixed/  
New Traveller (other))

##### **2/ Please tell us about your early life**

- (i) Parents' occupation
- (ii) Parents' education
- (iii) Accommodation (site/house/nomadic) (site = local authority/private authorised/ private  
unauthorised/ unauthorised encampment)
- (iv) Most positive/negative experiences

##### **3/ Please tell us about your education**

- (i) School (How long/How many? type)
- (ii) What was school like? (positive/negative?)
- (iii) Did you receive education/training after school? (positive/negative?)
- (iv) Do you have any educational qualifications?

##### **4/ Please tell us about your current accommodation?**

- (i) Accommodation (site/house/nomadic/ site (local authority, authorised private, unauthorised  
private, unauthorised encampment)
- (ii) Mortgage/Interested in credit to own a home
- (iii) Positives/negatives

As can be seen in Table B(i) the most commonly explored topics relate directly to site design and provision with broader economic and social inclusion domains being less commonly explored.

## **5/ Please describe what you do for a living**

- (i) Title/roles
- (ii) How long have you been doing this?
- (iii) Give a brief outline of previous jobs
- (iv) What skills do you need in your present job?
- (v) How did you acquire these skills?
- (vi) What do you like/dislike about your job?
- (vii) Do you have employees? If yes what is their role?
- (viii) What has helped/inspired you to take this role?
- (ix) Do you tell customers/colleagues that you are a Gypsy/Traveller? (Give reasons)
- (x) What do other Gypsies/Travellers say about your work?
- (xi) Have/will your children follow you in your work? What do/will they do?
- (xii) Are you happy with your standard of living?
- (xiii) Do you have internet access? (where) Do you use it for work?

## **6/ General Opinions and Experiences**

- (i) What would you like to change in your life? (
- ii) Do you ever experience racism?
- (iii) Do many other Gypsies/Travellers do work like yours? (Give reasons)
- (iv) What do you think would help more Gypsies/Travellers get jobs/develop businesses?

## **7/ Social Networks**

- (i) Who do you spend most time with? (Family or Friends)
- (ii) Are the majority of your friends GRT?
- (iii) Where and when do you meet family and friends?
- (iv) Do you play a role in any outside groups those of work? (community groups, councils, political parties, trade unions etc) If yes, why?

## **8/ Benefits**

- (i) Have you ever been unemployed? If so why?/Did you claim benefits?

## **Appendix D**

### ***Informed Consent and Project Information provided to Participants***

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain are carrying out research to find out how some Gypsies and Travellers have secured economic inclusion (that is set up a business or got into paid/professional employment)

Thank you for considering taking part in this important research study. Without the participation of people like you we wouldn't be able to work to bring about positive change for Gypsies and Travellers.

#### **What we want to do.**

We want to carry out tape recorded interviews with financially successful Gypsies and Travellers.

Anything you tell us will be anonymised – for example we won't tell anyone who you are, and will make sure your name is not included on any data so nobody can trace information back to you about your work or financial situation.

Nobody but the researchers will know who you are and all records will be locked away in a filing cabinet so nobody else can get to them.

We will get rid of the tape we use for interview (wipe it) 12 months after the project. Only the person who copies out the tape into writing (transcribes it) will hear the tape.

If you don't want to be taped you can tell us and we can see if it is possible to write down your answers instead although it might not be as helpful for us as we can't always get down everything you say about how you became successful if we aren't able to record you.

We hope that this research study will help other people know how to go about developing their own business and success.

We hope that it will help policy makers such as local and central Government develop policies to help Gypsies and Travellers secure a good living, and get better jobs as well improving their general well being.

#### **How You Can Help? - What we want to know.**

We want to ask you questions about how you were successful in setting up a business/getting a job.

We would like you to tell us what has helped you do this – for example, access to family support; education; learning a trade from your family...

#### **Guarantee**

\* We will only interview you if consent is given

\* We will pay you £15 for the interview

\* The interview will be recorded but will be confidential no one else will listen to it outside of the project and no reference to your name will be made in the final report.

\* You will be invited to a seminar where you will be told about the findings of the research and be invited to comment before the final report is written. You will be paid £50 for attending the seminar and will have a chance to shape the findings of the report.

\* You will get a final copy of the report and a free place at a conference to discuss it.

\* If you decide you do not want to participate you can withdraw your consent at any time with no consequences to yourself.

If you need more information contact.....

With your permission we can send more information or talk to someone else on your behalf about the project.